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[*Frontispiece.*

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Edited by KENELM D. COTES, M.A., Oxon.

CHIVALRY

BY

F. WARRE CORNISH, M.A.

WITH 27 ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON

SWAN SONNENSCHEIN & CO., LIM.

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EDITORIAL PREFACE

IN introducing an old subject with some variety of form, it is easy to be brief and at the same time clear, because the reader supplies from previous knowledge so much that is left unsaid; but in stepping quite out of the beaten track nothing perhaps but actually treading the new path can make the goal that it is intended to reach plainly visible. It is not desirable that the whole object of a new series of books written on a new plan should be capable of being condensed into a few pages; this can be done only for subjects whose scope is already well defined, where there are, and have been, many previous books written on the same lines, though perhaps from slightly different points of view, and in which the only novelty to be looked for is in the style of writing and in the arrangement and amount of matter.

A New Subject.

Undoubted as is the influence of personality upon history the attention directed to it has hitherto been rather one-sided; the entire course of national life cannot be summed up in a few great names, and the attempt to do so is to confuse biography with history. This narrow view, besides ignoring other causes, leads to the overrating of details, and since a cause must be found somewhere, personal character becomes everything. The stability of law that is seen in a large number of instances cannot be discovered by watching single lives, however exalted; and history with no intention of discovering the condition of events becomes the sport of accident, resting in great measure for its interest on anecdote and rhetoric.

Personality.

Politics. The case is not much bettered by long accounts of acts of parliament, with summaries of debates, and numbering of divisions, and more lives of statesmen, eminent and mediocre. The details of parliament no more than the details of biographies afford sufficient data for scientific observation, if the forces of the society that surround them are omitted. Neither does the addition of military detail help much in the comprehension of the course of events; one battle is much like another, except when treated by the professional soldier or sailor, or at all events in the light of professional books; and victories or defeats depend upon something else besides the position of the ground or the plans of the moment. It has been reserved for a naval expert of another power to point this out to the multitudinous writers of the history of the great naval power of the world.

Social Questions. Social questions are to-day taking the foremost place in public interest; the power behind the statesman is seen to be greater in controlling contemporary history than the eloquence or experience of any single man. We see this to be so now, and our knowledge of the present suggests the question whether it has not always been so; and whether the life of society, though it has not had the same comparative weight, has not always been a more important factor than the life of the individual.

The "Social England" Series. The "Social England" series rests upon the conviction that it is possible to make a successful attempt to give an account, not merely of politics and wars, but also of religion, commerce, art, literature, law, science, agriculture, and all that follows from their inclusion, and that without a due knowledge of the last we have no real explanation of any of the number.

Not as an Appendix.

But the causes that direct the course of events will become no clearer if to one-third politics and one-third wars we add another third, consisting of small portions of other subjects, side by side, but yet apart from one another.

The Central Idea.

The central idea is that the greatness or weakness of a nation does not depend on the greatness or weakness of any one man, or body of men, and that the odd millions have always had their part to play. To understand how great that was and is, we must understand the way in which they spent their lives, what they really cared for, what they fought for, and, in a word, what they lived for. To leave out nine-tenths of the national life, and to call the rest a history of the nation, is misleading. It is so misleading that, treated in this mutilated manner, history has no pretension to be a science: it becomes a ponderous chronicle, full of details which, in the absence of any other guiding principle, are held together by chronology. Writers of great name and power escape from this limitation, which, however, holds sway for the most part in the books that reach the great majority of readers, that is those who have not time to read an epoch in several volumes.

The Carrying Out of the Idea.

It is not necessary, in seeing a famous town, to visit every public building and private house, and so for the carrying out of this plan it has been determined that adequate treatment can be secured of certain subjects in a series of books that should be popular not only in style, but also in the demands they make upon the reader's time.

Specialists.

It would be useless for any one writer to pretend to accomplish this task, though when the way is cleared a social history connecting more closely and summarizing the work of all the contributors will

with any other political and social events, and in fact we prepare for the question as to the influence of commerce on politics and society.

The Universities. Those who know the part that commerce plays in civilization are aware that the growth of intercourse will naturally bring larger culture, and the learning of the old world and of the Saracens will be taught in the schools of the West. It will be impossible to rigidly confine the currents of thought to the four seas, or even only to break the barrier here and there by such stories as that of the Roman missionaries. England must be looked on as belonging to the circle of a great civilization. How far Englishmen went abroad, and how far the men of other nations came to England, requires to be set forth. Again,

The Travelled Englishman and the Traveller in England.

The Fine Arts. to those who believe in the organic connection of all branches of the national life it will be of interest to learn in what way the character of art partook of the nature of life around it, how far its methods or motives can be borrowed, why the fifteenth century gave pause to our art, why at a certain period cathedrals ceaced to be built, and when it was we added great names in our turn to the list of painters.

Music. The music of Anglo-Saxon and of Dane will to some make clearer the influence of skald and gleeman; the effect of poetry will be noted, the growth of instruments, and the increasing complexity of music.

Scenery. Possibly the change in the landscape might be described: the alteration in the face of the country with the draining of fens, the making of roads, and the clearing of forests; the introduction of fresh trees and plants.

The Influence of Geography on Social Life. We must recognise that the position of Great Britain, as the known world grew wider, altered for the better; the effect of rivers, mountain,s

and seas in fixing the boundaries of kingdoms and sub-kingdoms, in altering or preserving languages, in determining politics and the opinions of districts, and, the chief point of all, in deciding the character of what bids fair to be the language of commerce, and, probably, of all international communication.

The Homes and Household Implements.

As it is important to know where men lived in relation to the world at large in order to understand how they lived, so we should be acquainted with their dwelling-places, whether in town or country, at any period; we should observe the changing styles of building, distinguish the international influence, the part that the facility of obtaining material played, and notice the gradual evolution of the rooms, the way that they were adorned and furnished, to see how far in beds and baths, in the provision for study and privacy, civilization was advancing.

Social England Classics.

From their literature we can gather most, for here, with not much thought of history, contemporary spoke to contemporary of what each knew well. In the pre-Elizabethan drama we can see the natural touches that show it was not elaborated as an exercise, but with the intention of possessing a living interest, and in what interested them we discover their attitude, not merely to religion, but to much else besides. By recognising this fact we learn that masterpieces of literature lose their full meaning unless we find in them, besides creative power and command of the technique of art, "the very age and body of the time." Shakespeare's England and Chaucer's England are what Shakespeare and Chaucer knew of life; the outer gallery of pictures the unknown artists drew, from which we pass into the inner rooms whose walls are covered by the groups and figures that the masters painted.

Biography and History. In this widening of history, biography is no longer cramped by being cut off from social life; the great men are not isolated, but take their proper places among their fellow-countrymen, their lives forming fit landmarks, because they are akin to the people among whom they live, their characters not adapted to the century of the commentator, but bearing the impress of the forces round them, whose constant pressure is part of their life. They and those who are lesser than themselves, and the changing conditions that create them and are modified by them, form the great and continuous whole, which constantly alters, as all life alters, coming from the past and linked to the future. It no longer becomes necessary to make all times alike, except for constitutional changes, or improvement in weapons, and the crowning or death of a king, pleading the half-truth that human nature is the same in every age.

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CHIVALRY

PREFACE

TO write a History of Chivalry would be the work of a life-time; little less, indeed, than to write a history of the Middle Ages; for the spirit of chivalry entered into all mediæval life, and the one is unintelligible without the other. Much light has been thrown in modern times upon the wars of the Middle Ages, the religious and political institutions, the history of law, feudalism and commerce. More facts are known, and a mass of mediæval literature has been brought to light since the days of Sir Walter Scott. But the facts are for the most part of the same character as those which he found in Anna Comnena, Villehardouin, Froissart, and Monstrelet; and the romances and romantic and epic poems tell the same story as Sir Thomas Malory, in the *Morte d' Arthur*. Little can be added to the conception of chivalry as it was evolved from mediæval records by Curne de Ste. Palaye,[1] and set forth by Scott, Southey, and their followers, whose obligation to Ste. Palaye cannot be

[1] *Mémoires sur l'ancienne Chevalerie &c.*, par M. de la Curne de Ste. Palaye. Paris, 1759.

exaggerated. A writer, whose aim is rather to sketch a state of society than to chronicle a period, can do little more than glean after the harvest has been reaped. The lives of St. Lewis, Du Guesclin, the Maid of Orleans, Gaston de Foix, and Bayard, the chronicles of the Crusades, the writings of Froissart and Monstrelet, the stories of the Cid and the *Morte d'Arthur* contain all that is to be said in favour of chivalry. The picture has been drawn in too favourable colours; and modern writers, such as Freeman and Green, have brought out the shadows rather than the lights. I have done my best to understand a rule of sentiment and conduct which is more remote from modern life than the rules which prevailed in the times of the Greeks and Romans: but I have little to add to the picture which has been before the world for nearly a century, and no new view to put forward. The most that I can hope to do is to consider chivalry from various points of view, and to illustrate from contemporary writings its unity and universality, and its claim to be regarded as an institution which sufficed for its own time, and bore fruit in influence upon later days.

I have made no attempt to write a consecutive account of the times of chivalry. The subject is better studied in biographies and popular literature, than in histories and chronicles. Ideals and rules of conduct are practically the same in the 12th and in the 14th centuries, though the application of them may have been different; and the *fabliaux*, *chansons de geste*, and *romans* confirm the picture of society which is given by the earlier and later chroniclers.

CHAPTER I

Introductory

General view of the subject—Definition of chivalry—Distinction between gentle and simple—Various elements in chivalry—Its influence on the lower classes—Principal factors of chivalry—The rule of service—Knights and squires—Heraldry and distinction of ranks—Ceremony—Service of the Church—Knightly Orders—War and tournament—Service of ladies and the *gai saber*—Mediæval morality—International character of chivalry—Literature and its several elements, Celtic, Teutonic, Arabian—Religious Houses—Universities—Latin and French the universal languages—The 13th century—Obedience and innovation—Love and gallantry—Licentious character of Provençal and French literature—Relations between the nobles and the people—Merits and defects of the chivalric code of entiments—Origins—Ascendency of the mailed cavalry—The Crusades — Pilgrimage — Character of crusaders — St. Lewis—Birth of ideas between 11th and 13th centuries—Humanising of war and growth of courtesy—Decay of chivalry—Rise of the modern system of war and politics—Summary.

Chivalry is a word of many meanings. For the purposes of this book it may be taken to mean a body of sentiment and practice, of law and custom, which prevailed among the dominant classes in great part of Europe between the 11th and the 16th centuries; and which, more completely developed in some countries than others, was so far universal that a large portion of its usages is common to all the nations of western Europe. This institution may be defined as based upon the military and territorial system of the Teutonic nations, which brought into existence a distinction between men of noble blood and the rest of the world. The form which these sentiments and customs took was modified by the institu-

tions of the Roman Empire, and still more by those of the Catholic Church, which, in imposing its creed upon the German invaders, accepted and consecrated their military spirit to the service of religion: and to these influences was added in a later age a new element imported from outside, the worship of woman.

The history of chivalry is not merely the history of a noble caste, though the usages and honours of chivalry belonged to none but gentlemen born, and though those who enjoyed them disdained to admit their inferiors to any share in them. Chivalry also held up an example to men of low degree, and raised the courage, softened the manners and relaxed the morals of the common people. The standard of honour, honesty, decency, and sobriety, which is conformed to by the ruling classes, is to some extent a standard set for those below them in rank. It is only partially true that men imitate the vices of their betters. So far as it is true at all, it is also true that they imitate the virtues of their betters.

Thus the maxims of chivalry, alike in what they condemned and in what they enjoined, were felt as a social force by those who did not submit to their ruling as applicable to themselves. The history of chivalry is not confined to the habits and ideals of the few thousands of men and women who held political and social power in the Middle Ages, but is an important part of the general history of those times. Chivalry was powerful both for good and for evil. So far as it was based on pride and contempt of inferiors, or condoned and regulated vice, it degraded; so far as it upheld religion, honour and courtesy, it elevated

society. It is altogether a mistake—one to which recent historians have given countenance—to dwell entirely on the former point of view, and to see in the fantastic ceremonialism of chivalry nothing but an empty pageant and a cloak for social immorality. The very ceremonialism was a protest against brutality and anarchy; and the science of love was not only a masquerade of virtue and vice adopting each other's colours, but both in its origin and its aim tended to raise appetite into sentiment, and sentiment into purity. If the practice of chivalry was compatible with gross immorality, it was an advance on what had gone before, and no higher ideal of sexual relations has ever been put forward than that which the best of the knights professed and practised.

Chivalry, then, may be defined as the moral and social law and custom of the noble and gentle class in Western Europe during the later Middle Ages, and the results of that law and custom in action. It applies, strictly speaking, to gentlemen only. Its three principal factors are war, religion, and love of ladies: its merits and faults spring from those three heads, and all the side influences which attend its growth and decay may be summed up under these.

The whole duty of a gentleman was included in the idea of chivalry; and his life from his early childhood was regulated by it. The principle of service to God, his lord, and his lady underlay everything. The word *militare*, which, in low Latin, meant 'feudal service,' explains to the knight the spirit which is to guide all his actions. He can never escape, nor can he wish to escape, from the rule of service imposed upon him alike by religion, military duty, and love;

and from these three elements, intimately connected with pride of birth, comes that frame of character which is expressed by the terms honour and loyalty—terms, the virtues equivalent to which were not unknown in ancient times and remote countries, but to which chivalry gave form and consciousness, whilst it also, by misunderstanding and misapplying them, gave rise to strange perversions of mercy, purity, and honesty.

To serve and be served by equals is more ennobling than to use the hired services of inferiors; and, though based on pride of birth, such service combined dignity with submission, and cultivated the virtues of independence, self-reliance and submission to just authority. The devotion of squires to their lords, of which we read so many instances in Froissart, was no artificial sentiment, but true service, exalting both the inferior and the superior, binding them to each other, and producing in both a sense of duty and honour which is the soldier's highest excellence. Knight and squire worshipped one ideal; and however the noble soldier of the Middle Ages may have fallen below or transgressed the whole duty of chivalry, this relation retained its original character throughout the whole age in which the world was ruled by armoured cavalry. And among the forces which have ruled in the world, those represented by the rustic nobility of Rome, the civic *bourgeoisie* of Greece, the farmers of Switzerland and the burghers of the Low Countries, the parliamentary lords and gentry of England, the democratic plutocracy of our own time, it would be difficult to refuse a high place, with all its faults, to the chivalry of France and England, if it is only from the fact that they

were more conscious of an ideal than any other class of independent and undisputed rulers.

In these ideas of service the knight to be was brought up. War and its mimicry were to be his business, honour and religion the sanction of his actions; to do the pleasure of ladies was his chief solace and the mainspring of his service. The 'science' of heraldry, and the distinction of ranks on which it was founded, taught him, whilst valuing his own station, to show reverence to his superiors in rank, and gentleness to his inferiors. He was bred up to think much of ceremony, whether the social ceremony which regulated the courtesies of daily life, or the more serious ceremony of his consecration to knighthood and his bearing in the battle and the tournament. Connected with heraldry and ceremony were the laws and usages of the feudal system, and the symbolical consecration of these by solemn forms, the tenure of land by knight service, and the consequent personal loyalty to his liege lord. Part of his service was due to the Church. He was brought up in the use of her sacraments, and in obedience to her precepts and reverence for her ministers. The Crusader, the Templar, the Hospitaller, and the Knight of Santiago were champions of the Church against the infidel. The knight's consecration to chivalry was after the form of a sacrament, and to defend Holy Church was part of his vow of initiation. There were, it is true, many knights in all countries and in all times who fulfilled the ideal of chivalry on the field of battle or in the lists, and in the bowers of ladies, and who yet had not a love of God in their hearts. But the least religious acknowledged the authority of religion; and it was the imputation of im-

piety rather than of immorality which destroyed the Templars; for impiety was in those days a worse imputation than immorality; and the more hateful the crime, the more ready is the popular voice to charge it upon a class which has incurred odium.

War, like hunting, is a pleasure as well as a business; a pleasure so intoxicating that it absorbs a man's whole thoughts and faculties. The busiest warriors, the La Hires and Hotspurs, had little leisure for singing and dancing, writing love-poems and performing love-vows. But in the lives of all knights the tournament bore a principal part, and the laws and customs of the tournament were inseparable from the love of ladies. And outside the reality or the imitation of war, it would seem that the whole of a knight's leisure time might be spent in hunting and hawking with ladies, or in music and amorous poetry. Nothing shows the unity of the chivalric sentiment more than the uniformity, during the whole period of which we are treating, of the chivalric literature, whether its note was that of love or of deeds of arms. Indeed, all that occupied a knight's thoughts could be expressed in terms of the *gai saber* or 'gay science' of poetry and gallantry. The laws of gallantry were more imperious than even those of military honour.

The rise of a noble service of ladies, and its degradation to licensed immorality, may be placed side by side with the perfection of the character of a *preux chevalier* and its decline in the 15th and 16th centuries into the selfish quarrelsomeness of the duello and the vulgar ostentation of the lists. Causes of corruption were present during the whole period of chivalry, and bad knights and good were always mingled.

If there was a point of culmination, it may be placed between 1250 and 1350; not that chivalry itself was more truly taught and more nobly exemplified then than at other times; but because the Christian world at that time was animated with a higher and fuller life.

During this century, and indeed throughout the period of chivalry, knighthood was an international freemasonry. Every court in Europe was a centre of the gay science and the art and practice of arms. Nations, except for the accident of language, were then less clearly distinguished than now. Norman, Angevin and Gascon lords held of the Kings of England, and the King of England was a vassal of the King of France. Knights errant and troubadours were welcome everywhere, and their language was a *lingua franca* common to the courts of France, Germany, and England. The *romans*, *fabliaux*, *chansons de geste*, and ballads of southern and central France were recited and sung in England; and the Celtic literature of Ireland, Wales, and Brittany, and the Teutonic legends of Charles the Great and of the Niblungs, as well as the love-poems of the Arabs, found their way to Provence. Thus the native literature of England took a European colouring. The establishment of Houses of Templars and Hospitallers in every country worked in the same direction; so did the alien priories, religious houses affiliated to larger abbeys over seas; as did also the œcumenical authority of the Roman Church and the community of scholars and divines who held benefices and wrote and disputed in the Universities of all countries, using the common language of the Church. Through the two universal languages, Latin and French, the Middle Ages enjoyed an

advantage of common speech and literature which later centuries have lost. We cannot easily overestimate the influence of a common literature in moulding the thought of Europe into likeness: and among the literary influences which broke down national barriers, none was more powerful than that of Provence.

Deeds of arms in war and tournament, social intercourse among the noble class, and all the relations between men and women, both married and single, were regulated by, not merely (as in our day) reflected in, the literature of gallantry. The 12th and 13th centuries were a time of legislation and definition. As Edward I and St. Lewis settled the bases of law and constitutional government, as Thomas Aquinas laid down the axioms of religion and philosophy, as the builders of churches and castles framed laws of construction, proportion, and ornament in architecture, so the constructive and ordering spirit of an age more bound by law and authority, and more occupied in fixing their foundations than any which the world has known, prescribed a rule of sentiment and conduct, to which all knights and ladies rendered unquestioning obedience. The greatness of the 13th century lay in its reconcilement of obedience and innovation. Dante is its representative in both; creating a new language and a new literature with no revolt against the old; living among the rebellious conditions of Italian civic life, but never temporising with or excusing what sins against authority; and yet pointing the way to greater freedom and tolerance hereafter.

This co-existence of romantic and exalted sentiments with a low standard of morals; the consecration of sexual passion

by a refined idealism; the submission, according to laws of gallantry, of the stronger to the weaker sex, is so characteristic of the chivalric temper that it exceeded in practical importance both the military and the religious element in chivalry. From the middle of the 12th century to the end of the 14th, when political questions began to take the place of feudal questions, and changes in the art of war endangered the ascendency of the military caste, the law of gallantry was equal, if not superior, to the law of military honour as a guide to conduct; the two usually worked in the same direction; but love, since it was not only a personal sentiment but the illustration of a social law, occupied at least as large a place in the soldier's mind as soldierly ambition. 'La galanterie' says Ste. Palaye. 'étoit comme l'âme de la société.' 'He were never good warrior that could not love aright.'[1]

Such sayings as these come from the heart of mediæval society. It is impossible to appreciate the motives and actions of a remote age without considering them from within, and from their own point of view; and the student of chivalry must qualify his ideas of morality and honour by the rules under which lords and ladies lived. He may compare one state of society with another, and form a judgment between them by the light of modern experience; but in estimating characters and actions belonging to the past age he must use the rules and measures which were current then. And among these, gallantry must be accepted as 'the soul of society:' if he finds the tone of thought on these matters intolerably gross and vicious, he must re-

[1] The *Sowdone of Babylon.*

member that it is an incident of the passage from barbaric to civilized life; and he must allow something—since France set the fashion—to the 'esprit gaulois,' which is more free-spoken and more licentious than that of Germany and England. Undoubtedly French literature and French interpretation of the gay science had a corrupting influence on English society; but it also exercised a civilising and humanising influence, and the bad cannot easily be separated from the good. We shall have occasion to advert to the Provençal literature of chivalry, which has been dealt with at length in another volume belonging to this series:[1] for the present we need only indicate the fact that the gay science proceeded from Provence and France, and largely affected the thought and sentiment of all Europe.

Chivalry, as we said above, concerns none but those of gentle birth. It is credited with the inhuman disregard of those below its own condition, and this is put down in great measure to French influence. 'Under the first king whose temper was distinctly English,'[2] says Green,[3] 'a foreign influence told most fatally on our manners, our literature, our national spirit . . . The "chivalry," so familiar in Froissart, that picturesque mimicry of high sentiment, of heroism, love, and courtesy, before which all depth and reality of nobleness disappeared to make room for the coarsest of profligacy, the narrowest caste-spirit, and a brutal indifference to human suffering, was specially of French creation.'

This view of chivalry, for which Green and his teacher Freeman are largely responsible, contains no doubt

[1] Rowbotham, *Troubadours.* [2] Edward I.

[3] *Short History*, pp. 182, 183 (1888).

a truth: but before we condemn chivalry as having produced the evil which it did not cure, we ought to imagine what had gone before. The savagery of the Norman period, the rigour of William the Conqueror, the selfish tyranny of William Rufus, the cruelty of the barons under Stephen, were neither inspired nor hindered by chivalry; and we should remember that whatever were the vices of the chivalric period, it was during that period that slavery gradually disappeared, and the foundations of equal justice and the power of the Commons were laid.

It is impossible to trace in detail the beginnings of human institutions, because they go back beyond the scope of history. The river Thames is said to rise in the Seven Springs; but the Thames at London Bridge owes its volume to seventy times seven rivers and rivulets, each of which has contributed something to the mass. The origins of chivalry are to be found, if found at all, in the ancient customs of Gauls, Germans, Western Celts, and Arabs. It has no single origin as a separate institution; and we can only take a point of departure where we find it already differentiated from the chaos of customs and sentiments which accompanied its early growth, and which assume form and order, and therefore authority, in the course of the 11th century. We shall assume this period as the point of departure for several reasons. It was now that the Western nations came, under the influence of the Church, into close contact and common action in the crusades; when national distinctions began to take the place of feudal disintegration on the one hand, and of the Carolingian Empire on the other; when the Normans breathed their innovating spirit

into the forms of the past; when the universal claims of the Papacy were asserted and maintained; when the feudal system of land-tenure by knightly service was established as an organised unity, and the hierarchy of rank, and consequent military service were brought under rule, and produced something like a freemasonry of noble degree and noble custom throughout Europe. This was the period of the ascendency of mail-clad cavalry, an ascendency which brought Europe under the power of the armed class; now the orders of soldier-clergy were formed; the knights of all nations emulated each other in deeds of valour done against the infidels; heraldry arose and suddenly sprang up into a science; whilst from the Celtic West, from Provence and the neighbouring lands of Moorish Spain, and from the East, the doctrine of gallantry was brought in to leaven the ancient barbarism of the North; tournaments were frequented by knights errant from all countries, and the opening of new trade routes brought East and West into acquaintance with each other, and enlarged the horizon of Christendom.

All these novelties, and the shaping through their action of a new and international order of civilization, may be dated from the first Crusade. We do not say that these movements are to be ascribed to the Crusades as a cause; but rather as an occasion. The Crusades were themselves an effect of an expansion of the human intellect and emotion, the causes of which are hard to investigate, like to those other outbursts of universal energy which mark the age of Charles the Great, the 12th and the beginning of the 13th century, the Renaissance of the 15th and 16th, and the

Revolution of the 18th. Besides the Crusades and the rise of chivalry, the distinguishing features of this age may be illustrated by such names as Gregory VII., the organiser of the Papal power, Bernard and Anselm of theology, Scotus of philosophy, Suger the founder of Gothic architecture, William, Count of Poitou and Aquitaine, the troubadour.

We speak of a 'young age' and a 'young nation,' as if the world had periods of youth and senescence; and such terms may fairly be used to illustrate an analogy. But the world is always young, when new interests are opened to its view. Alexander, by shewing that a Greek army could march anywhere and do anything, founded a new civilisation; the destruction of a rival opened to the Romans the door of universal empire; the adventure of Columbus created a new era in commerce and marine; and many more instances might be cited to shew that great movements have had their rise, not so much from the birth of new ideas, as from an opportunity of applying ideas to new conditions.

Such an opportunity presented itself towards the end of the 11th century. Pilgrims came back from the Holy Places, lately occupied by the Seljukian Turks, with complaints of misusage. Peter the Hermit took up the cause; Pope Urban II. gave it his sanction; all the devotion, all the enterprise, ambition, and restlessness of nations beginning to groan under the tightening of domestic tyranny, the aspiration and the discontent of all Europe, swelled the cry of 'Dieu le veut;' and the crowd of enthusiasts was joined by princes who wished to found new

kingdoms, and nobles and knights who sought an adventure in which to display their prowess, or hoped to pay their debts by the plunder of the East.

The first Crusade was the marriage of War and Religion, that consecration by the Church of the military spirit, which was the first step in the creation of chivalry.

The history of the Crusades might seem to sum up the history of early chivalry. The Eastern lands were the playground of chivalry. There was practised the whole art of noble warfare. There were exercised the virtues which are summed up in the words religion, and courtesy of war. But one element essential to chivalry is wanting to the earlier Crusades, the love of ladies; and the absence of this makes itself felt through all the glories of war. The chronicles of the First Crusade are barbarous in sentiment, however lofty in their ideals of religious fervour and military prowess. Godfrey, Tancred, Baldwin, and Raymond, it is true, are not merely mirrors of chivalry, but instances of noble virtue. But their faults and their virtues are so remote from those of our own time that we find it difficult to form a true idea of the men themselves. Their parallels in modern times are to be found, not among Western nations, but in Afghanistan or the Soudan. We observe in them reckless courage, personal pride and self-respect, courteous observance of the word of honour, if plighted according to certain forms, disregard of all personal advantage except military glory; and on the other hand savage ferocity, deliberate cruelty, anger indulged almost to the point of madness, extravagant display, childish wastefulness, want of military discipline, want of good faith alike to Christians and infidels; the virtues and

vices of Homeric heroes, not of Christian paladins as imagined in the ideal pictures of Tasso and Spenser.

If we compare with the deeds of these warriors the words and actions of St. Lewis, the last of the crusaders, we are conscious that the world has moved a long way onward. There is less of the joyous enterprise and love of novelty which belongs to the youth of nations and individuals; but there is more deliberate knowledge of what is undertaken; the sense of duty prevails over the ardour of action; the tone of feeling in the king and his followers is less extravagant and sanguine, and therefore less suited to great deeds of arms; but also more serious and devout, more conscious of discipline and responsibility, more capable of balancing right and wrong, and enduring the restraints of justice and mercy, than that which prevailed among the companions of Godfrey of Bouillon.

Labour would be lost in attempting to collect all the influences which came into existence between the 11th and the 13th century, and changed the face of Europe. In that fruitful interval, theology, philosophy, and law were remodelled; poetry, architecture and music were re-invented and under the influence of the Provençal schools of love and poetry, the 'gallantry' of the Arabs altered all the relations of social life, and brought to bear on human action a new and immensely powerful motive.

The worship of women occupies so large a space in the institutions of chivalry that we shall have to refer to it in dealing with every part of the subject. The humanising of war and the growth of courtesy between enemies is not directly derived from the rules of the gay science; but the

new relation to women was the most powerful among many causes which combined to make men more gentle in manner, and more temperate and considerate in act and speech, than before the new birth of ideas in the 11th and 12th centuries;—a new birth which was not a 'Renascence,'[1] since it was in no sense a return to antiquity, but a creation of new ideas and an expression of them in new forms; differing from the outburst of new thought in the time of Charles the Great, in that it was suited to its conditions and was not blighted by a barbarous environment; and differing from the Renaissance of the 15th and 16th centuries, in that it was not a rebellious movement, but founded upon authority, law, and custom, and had for its object, or rather as its result, the foundation of a new discipline in all the relations of life, spiritual and temporal, not the emancipation of the human race from false or antiquated authority.

Each movement was suited to its age, and was a genuine growth, not an attempt to keep alive what had served its time and ceased to be vital; nor an artificial imitation and resuscitation of bygone ideas, like the bastard chivalry of the 15th century, oppressed and corrupted by the insolence of personal governments, and the substitution of a paid soldiery for knightly service; or the combination of lawlessness and affectation which disfigured and weakened the high ideals of the Revolution of 1789.

The question of the decay of chivalry is complicated and difficult, and we reserve it for a later chapter. It may be said here, however, that chivalry declined not more from

[1]See H. Martin, *Hist. de France*, vol. iii.

diseases engendered in its own body than from the introduction of new and foreign elements in war and society. Large developments in the art of war, and the employment of archery, infantry and artillery reduced mailclad cavalry to an inferior position, and diminished opportunities of personal distinction. Chivalry by degrees disappeared from war, to shine in the tournament: and as the tournament became more and more an amusement and an occasion for display, rather than an image of war and a school of military skill, it ceased to be real, lost prestige, and degenerated into masquerade. The concentration of military power into the hands of sovereigns broke down the life of feudalism and destroyed the independence of barons and knights. When the heavy-armed knight became a mere trooper, and rode to war side by side with paid men-at-arms as well accoutred, horsed, and trained as himself, vows to do doughty deeds for the love of ladies in the name of the swan or the peacock, love-knots, sleeves, banners and *cris-de-guerre* became ridiculous, and the days of Don Quixote were not far distant. Chivalry, the ideal of a noble world which churls were to admire and obey, had lived its time, a time of brilliancy and glory; and it expired not without dignity, before the spirit of democracy had arisen to flout it It may be said without paradox that chivalry survived itself; and that no better representatives of it are to be found in history than the noblemen and gentlemen who fought without parade and affectation on either side in the English Civil War.

To sum up; Chivalry taught the world the duty of noble service willingly rendered. It upheld courage and enter-

prise in obedience to rule, it consecrated military prowess to the service of the Church, glorified the virtues of liberality, good faith, unselfishness and courtesy, and above all, courtesy to women. Against these may be set the vices of pride, ostentation, love of bloodshed, contempt of inferiors, and loose manners. Chivalry was an imperfect discipline, but it was a discipline, and one fit for the times. It may have existed in the world too long: it did not come into existence too early: and with all its shortcomings it exercised a great and wholesome influence in raising the mediæval world from barbarism to civilisation.

CHAPTER II

KNIGHTHOOD

Origin of knighthood in Gaul and Germany—Celtic element unimportant—Institutions of Teutonic nations—Military democracy tending to aristocracy—Ceremonies of early knighthood—Cavalry—Equality of knighthood—Influence of the Crusades—Different development in England, France, Germany, etc.—Feudalism and chivalry more French than English—English in the Crusades—Richard I—England brought into the European system—Apprenticeship in arms—Knighthood as an incident of land-tenure and a reward for service—Knighthood conferred at the age of twenty-one—Decline of knighthood—Brotherhood in arms—Renunciation of brotherhood—Ideals of chivalry—Nelson—Don Quixote—St. Francis—Conception of chivalric virtue—Reality of knighthood—Its dignity—Sir Tristan.

THE words Chivalry and Knighthood are strictly speaking identical, since Chevalier and Knight[1] are synonyms; but in common usage 'chivalry' denotes the whole group of ideas and customs which prevailed among the noble and gentle caste: 'knighthood' the estate itself: an estate within which all who were admitted to it were equal, whatever differences of descent or rank might exist among them.

The origin of knighthood is to be sought in the primeval customs of the Gallic and Germanic tribes which overspread the whole of Western Europe, beginning from a period

[1] The A.S. word *cniht* (boy, youth) was used before the Conquest to mean a dependant holding land from one of the great vassals by knight service (*militia*), whether dubbed knight or not. Similarly *serviens* (serjeant or esquire) is a military dependant not of knightly estate.

Oman, *Hist: of the Art of War*, p. 369.

antecedent to all historical records, and only to be traced by archæological and linguistic evidence.

Although the early institutions of Gaul and Germany closely resembled each other, and Gaulish terms and customs may be observed in French history, the ascendency of the Frankish invaders over the Gauls and the Iberian or Celtiberian population which they had ruled was so complete that the Celtic element in chivalry may be disregarded, until it came in at a late period in a different form and for a different purpose. Historical chivalry is Teutonic, not Celtic. The Frankish horsemen are the precursors of the knights of Christendom, and Baduila the Ostrogoth 'the first chivalrous figure in modern history.'[1]

Both among the Germans and the Gauls a military democracy, headed by chiefs of divine descent, ruled the subject races and a population of slaves. Among the Germans all free men might attend the meetings of their tribe; they had the right of electing their own chieftains (*principes*) who, with assessors for the district (*pagus*), administered justice and interpreted law or custom; they were commanded by generals (*duces*) or leaders in war; and above these was, in some tribes, a single ruler or king, whom the freemen elected from the members of the royal family, and had the right of deposing in case of unworthiness.

There was thus a double hierarchy; that of the *principes*, leaders in peace, and the *duces*, leaders in war and chosen for personal prowess; and above all, and destined to overwhelm the national nobility, the kings.

A similar if not identical constitution existed among the

[1] Oman, *Art of War*, p. 199.

Gauls: and in both races, as they passed from the nomadic to the settled condition, the bond between chief and subjects partook of a double nature, being partly a relation tion of personal allegiance, *(commendatio,)* partly a relation connected with the tenure of land and the military obligation, incumbent upon each district, of furnishing a certain number of men to the national levy. The first of these relations is called by Tacitus *comitatus:* each *princeps* having attached to him personally a body of freemen who accompanied him in war: the second was developed, as communal property became gradually converted into landed estate, into the military system, whether feudal levy or the militia of districts and counties.

Every youth born of free parents, on attaining military age and having proved his fitness, was admitted into the war-fraternity of the clan and tribe, by the ceremony of investing him with the warrior's spear and buckler, belt and sword; the spurs, the red robe, the *accolade*, etc., were added in process of time, but the belt remained as the principal symbol of knighthood, probably (though it had a different origin) coming to be identified with the *cingulum* of Roman officials.

In all primitive societies the richer class form the cavalry. A knight is a freeman who possesses a horse.[1] The Germans were not a riding people like the Tartars and other steppe-dwelling tribes; but the Goths learnt the use of cavalry in their contest with the Roman empire, and the Gothic cavalier became 'the arbiter of war, the lineal ancestor of all the knights of the Middle Ages, the inaugurator of that

[1] *Omnes pagenses Franci qui caballum habent vel habere possunt* were commanded by Charles the Bald to bear arms (*militare*).

ascendency of the horseman which was to endure for a thousand years.'[1] The combination of the mailed Gothic or Frankish rider armed with lance and sword and mounted upon the heavy horse, both trained to act in close column, took the place of disciplined infantry; and the history of war till the 14th and 15th centuries is also the history of the predominance of that class which furnished the heavy-armed cavalry man.

Within this class, that of the freemen, all were originally equal: and the equality of knighthood was directly derived from the equality of the freemen. But as the number of 'knightly' riders became smaller, owing to the accumulation of land in fewer hands and the substitution of individual for communal property, the government of the tribe tended to become an aristocracy instead of a democracy; and the progress of this change is inextricably mixed up with the development of the feudal system. The idea of equality, however, was never lost sight of; and the equality of all knights in respect of their knighthood was maintained to the last as one of the fundamentals of chivalry. All knights, whatever their degree, were 'companions' in chivalry.

Knighthood, when fully developed in the eleventh century—a time of action both in inventions and organisation, the period of the Normans and the great popes—was looked upon as a reward of valour, a sign of noble birth, a title to land and with it an obligation of reciprocal service and protection, a tie of brotherhood in arms, a religious bond blessed by the Church. All this, as we shall see in a later chapter,

[1] Oman, *History of the Art of War.*

was brought into stronger relief by the Crusades, in which knights from every part of Europe met as brothers in arms: and all the incidents of chivalry were heightened by contact with Eastern civilization, and by the national rivalry of princes and noble soldiers. The Church consecrated knighthood by sacramental forms, and almost looked upon it as an eighth sacrament[1]; and about the same time the doctrine of love became an essential part of chivalry, expressed in social life, in war, and in literature. Knighthood, from being a matter of war and feudal dependence, gained dignity by becoming romantic; and whatever unreality may have crept into it in later times, it never lost this character. So great was the dignity of knighthood (a dignity which was only heightened by degrees of rank) that the greatest prince held himself honoured by receiving knighthood at the hands of some famous captain. To wear the Garter or the Golden Fleece was not a mere compliment, but admittance to an inner circle of the brotherhood of knights. We read such titles as 'Johannes Dux Britanniae, *miles*'; as if the knightly appellation enhanced the princely style—and to this day the letters K.G. are never omitted after the names of the Queen's sons.

In our own country, never completely feudal or aristocratic, the development of knighthood was different from that which it received in France and Germany. In the pre-Conquest period, the wars waged in England against invaders and among rival princes were mainly infantry wars, and bore somewhat of a tumultuary character. The relation of land to military service was different from that

[1] Léon Gautier, *La Chevalerie en France.*

which prevailed on the Continent, the national force was not so fully organised, and knighthood was less closely connected with rank or feudal dependence. Knighthood, however, both as a token of military honour and as more or less connected with land tenure, existed in England, as in other Teutonic lands, from an early date. Alfred, for instance, knighted his grandson Athelstan, putting on him a red robe and girding him with belt and sword. But knighthood was not universal among the riding classes. It would appear rather to have been re-introduced into England among the Norman customs imported by Edward the Confessor, not having been prominent as an English usage; and it was regarded in England, except in the Edwardian times, rather as a ceremony and an honour than as an estate or a consecration. The English disinclination to take up knighthood as a feudal service appears throughout the Middle Ages, and comes out for the last time in 1630-1640, when the exaction of knighthood fines was objected to Charles I as one of the feudal grievances which led to the Great Rebellion.

The Danish conquest showed the weakness of the English military system. The army of William of Normandy, though not of overwhelming numbers, was superior in almost every respect to that of Harold. He had only to land his forces to ensure the defeat of his enemies.[1] England thus passed under the power of foreign sovereigns whose ideas and

[1] Strictly speaking, the defeat at Hastings was brought about by the English leaving their shield-wall formation; but the want of a standing army at the King's disposal, and of a proper force of cavalry put the English at a disadvantage. The time spent in marching south from Stamford Bridge might have been made up, if any effective organisation had existed.

whose art of warfare were entirely feudal. Though feudal ideas were favoured at the court of Edward the Confessor, the conversion of the English land tenure into a beneficiary tenure, and the establishment of a class of warrior nobles, clad in armour and forming the heavy cavalry, that is, the main strength of the king's army, began only at the Conquest. The various circumstances from which it resulted that feudalism never prevailed completely over English customs, and that barons and knights became in process of time not petty sovereigns but wealthy subjects (though this result had an influence on the colour of English chivalry) belong rather to general history than to the study of chivalry.

English chivalry, then, is of later growth than continental chivalry, inasmuch as the conception of chivalry as a part of a system of war, a hierarchy of rank, and a noble training, dates from the Norman Conquest.

The romantic aspect of chivalry, as a brotherhood of noble soldiers, binding all Christian knights into an order, and including in its idea the consecration of the Teutonic military spirit by the Church, and the service of ladies, only attained full development in the course of the crusading period; and it was not till the end of the 12th century that England took a prominent part in the Crusades. The Conquest and the subsequent settlement under Henry I left no leisure for crusading. The second Crusade, that of Conrad of Hohenstaufen and Lewis VII, took place in the crisis of Stephen's fortunes, and was joined by only a few adventurers from England. Henry II, busy with the affairs of England and half France, looked upon a knight as a tenant who held so many hides of land *per servitium*

militis, and could pay him so much scutage. His marriage with Eleanor of Aquitaine, the queen of troubadours and crusaders, a troubadour and crusader herself, led to a great development of chivalry in the reign of her son. To Richard I, the knight-errant and troubadour, a knight was a man-at-arms for the service of the crusade; a trooper, in fact.[1]

English chivalry, in the romantic sense, dates from Richard's crusade; and Freeman is so far justified in calling it un-English.

From the time of the third Crusade, England, brought into touch with European romance and enterprise, takes her place as one of the nations of Europe; independent and separate, it is true, but alive to all the movement of the world. The phrases, forms, and sentiments of European chivalry became current in England; and among them may be reckoned the dignity of knighthood, and the poetical aspect of chivalry, heightened as it was by the development of Provençal culture and the exploits of crusaders, which were brought to a focus in the Military Orders. The right of conferring knighthood belonged originally to every knight, since in knighthood all were equal; and this is implied in the romances of chivalry, though the privilege tended to become restricted in practice.[2] In our own country knighthood is now conferred by the sovereign only, or by his deputy, as in Ireland and India. But this is of comparatively recent date. As late as the time of Elizabeth,

[1] Stubbs, *Select Charters*, p. 123.

[2] Joinville, just before landing in Egypt (as if it were before a battle), knighted a young squire of noble birth, Monseigneur Hugh de Vaucouleurs, as well as two squires who had quarrelled on the way out, and whom perhaps he wished to unite in a chivalrous friendship.

Leicester and Essex conferred knighthood in the field, and the complaint made against the latter was not that he had usurped the right, but that he had used it too freely. Charles VI and VII made 'un peuple de chevaliers,' and the recovery of France from the English was attributed in great part to the valour of the new knights.

It was the custom for the Emperor to make knights at his coronation; and proclamation was always made whether any of the line of Dalberg were present, that he might come to receive the honour first—and so at other coronations and royal festivities and ceremonies. Honour is granted by the king; and he does himself honour by surrounding himself with new-made knights. But this right, highly prized when knighthood was a sacrament of military equality, ceased to be valued when it became a bauble of state, and an ornament of nobility.

According to the full conception of chivalry, the estate of knighthood was an honour only to be earned by apprenticeship and trial in arms. And to some extent knighthood was always prized as a reward of valour. But it was also a dignity attached to noble birth without consideration of merit, and one of the incidents of land-tenure. A minor in possession of a 'hauberk-fief' or knight's fee could be compelled by his suzerain to take up knighthood in respect of it, and so do his feudal service, as soon as he reached the age of twenty-one. Knighthood of the ceremonial or complimentary kind was often given at an earlier age. The Children of France were decorated at their birth with the riband of the Saint Esprit, and knighted at the font. Bayard, by request of the Duke of Bourbon, knighted his

eldest son, who was 'still in the hands of nurses and governesses.' This custom was not confined to royal personages; knighthood was often anticipated in the case of the sons of noblemen. But the strict rule of chivalry was that the novice should pass through the degrees of page and squire, make his proofs of chivalry by practice in the tournament and quest of adventure,[1] and not be admitted to knighthood till the full age of twenty-one, nor until he had proved himself worthy, and until an occasion arrived which made it opportune and dignified. To be knighted on the field was of course the most coveted honour; and we read of squires begging to be knighted before a battle, so as to be able to fight in the front ranks; ('au premier chef de la bataille') and of others 'winning their spurs,' like the Black Prince, in their first battle,[2] and being knighted after it. Thus Lewis IX and Joinville knighted some of their following on landing in Egypt, and batches of knights were made before and after Crécy, Poictiers and Agincourt. In time of peace a squire was thought knightworthy when he had 'travelled and been in divers feats of arms, and had wherewith to support the estate of chivalry, seeing that it is better to be a good squire than a poor knight. . . Then shall he take him some lord or gentleman of worth, and beg of him to make him knight in the name of God, Our Lady, and my lord St. George' (the patron of earthly chivalry, as St. Michael of heavenly) 'and the good knight shall give him his sword bare, kissing the while the cross of

[1] Chaucer's knight had travelled all over the world; and his son the squre had presumably been his companion in some of his adventures.

[2] Stanley, *Memorials of Canterbury*, p. 137.

it.'[1] Some lords, indeed, requited loyal service by refusing knighthood to a good squire for fear of losing a good servant, for a trusty squire, if he could bear the charges of the honour, might demand knighthood at his master's hands; and on the other hand a squire might have his own reasons for wishing to remain in service beyond the customary seven years:—

Estoit moult de haute gens:
Il n'estoit mie chevaliers:
Vallez[2] estoit: sept ans entiers
Avoit un chastelain servi.

. . . . . .

Li vallez n'avoit nul talent[3]
D'avoir armes hastivement.[4]

The age of twenty-one, as being that of full manhood, was fixed at an early period as the date of majority, carrying with it the right of the duel and the conditions of admission to knighthood. The new-made knight was not to repose on his honours, but to prove himself worthy of them by service in the field. To ride about from tournament to tournament, and display horses and suits of armour, as 'young King Henry,' the son of Henry II did,[5] was vain glory, not chivalry. Of such a knight Sir Floriant heard a woman cry, 'He has left chivalry and goes on adventures;' and Felyce will not have Guy of Warwick till he has 'won his shoes,' as well as his spurs.

As long as chivalry maintained its original character, the addition of merit to other claims was never undervalued. A knight was a soldier as well as a gentleman and a land owner, and thought much of the honour of knighthood and the obligation it implied.

[1] *Ste. Palaye*, i. Note 55. [2] squire. [3] desire.
[4] *Rom. de Guillaume au Faucon.* [5] see Bertrand de Born.

In the decline of chivalry, when ceremony had lost much of its meaning, knighthood came to be no more than a title, and was no longer prized as a symbol of personal qualities. But the true spirit of chivalry is expressed in the Romance of Sir Tryamour, where it is said of the novice in chivalry that :—

> Eveyr in hys hert he thoght
> 'To-day was I y-maked knyght!'

and Sir Perceforest was so joyous in the day of his knighting by King Alexander, that he rode about in the forest alone, ready to tilt at every tree, waving his sword and glorifying in his advancement. 'Adonc regarde hault et bas, et lui est advis que c'estoit belle chose d'ung homme quant il est armé. Lors se pensa qu'il s'armeroit du tout . . . lors va saisir à pannoyer et à escremer et à tournoyer entour son chef, et dist à soi-mesmes: "Or ne me fault riens de toute ma joye, fors que je trouvasse à qui jouster pour sçavoir si je pourray aulcune chose valoir."'

Among the gentler features of chivalry may be reckoned the beautiful institution of brotherhood in arms, by which two knights vowed faith and love to each other.[1] The brothers in arms wore the same arms and clothes, mingled their blood in one vessel, received the Sacrament. and kissed the pax together.[2] They engaged to support each other in battle and in all quarrels, and to have the same friends and enemies. Brotherhood in arms over-rode all

[1] This custom is of ancient origin. The Scandinavian warriors mixed their blood and drank it; a like ceremony is mentioned by Xenophon in the Anabasis.

[2] The Greek Prince of Edessa adopted Godfrey of Bouillon as his son by taking him 'between his shirt and his skin.'—Gibbon. Chap. lviii, Ducange, *sur Joinville.* Dissert. xxii.

duties, even to ladies, except those which were owed to the Sovereign. Hence when Henry Bolingbroke Duke of Hereford deposed Richard II, Lewis Duke of Orleans annulled the treaty of brotherhood which he had made with Bolingbroke some years before, and challenged him to combat at any place in France with 100 knights and squires on either side.[1]

Du Guesclin was brother in arms of Olivier de Clisson, and the Act of their brotherhood, like that of Bolingbroke and Orleans, has been preserved. They agree to support each other against all the world except the King of Rome and his brothers, the Viscomte de Rohan and their several liege lords, they will share all ransoms of prisoners and lands, will acquaint each other of any mischief intended, and will guard each other as brothers.[2] The Seigneur de Coucy was also a brother in arms of Clisson[3] and '*moult* s' entraymoient et s'appelloient frères et compagnons d'armes.' Gilles de Brun, Constable of France, was brother in arms to Joinville. So too Lewis XI and Charles of Burgundy; 'prenons et acceptons en nostre seul frère d'armes' is the phrase of their contract.

In the romance of Guy of Warwick, Sir Guy and Sir Tyrry say:—

> Wyll we now trowthe plyght,
> And be felows day and night;
> And whyll we be levande[4]
> Nodur fayle odur in no lande?

Though knighthood fell as far short of the chivalric ideal

[1] The contract and the defiance may be read in Monstrelet B. 1.
[2] Mills, *Hist. of Chivalry*, ii. 195. [3] and also of Louis de Sancère.
[4] living.

as Christian life of the Gospel rule, the ideal was kept in view ;—

> L'ordre demande nette vie,
> Chasteté et curtesye—

and

> Vous qui voulez l'ordre de chevalier,
> Il vous convient mener nouvelle vie.

It was a limited and imperfect ideal; but readers of Froissart and Sir Thomas Mallory cannot doubt that with all its faults it raised the life of those who aspired after it.

The spirit of chivalry can exist without its forms. Perhaps no more perfect example of a chivalrous nature can be found than that of Nelson. He was proud, resentful, harsh in his judgements, and unscrupulous in his actions. But in daring courage, generosity, good faith, and noble desire of glory, he was the very type of a knight; and his greatness kindled all with whom he came in contact. The 'Nelson touch,' as he proudly called it, was felt in all the fleet and through the country, in the same way as the character of the Black Prince was felt. Nelson's passion for Lady Hamilton completes the picture. In the middle ages this would have counted among his virtues. The estimate of his own times and of the succeeding generations makes allowances for it, and forgives the hero his madness. 'If there were more Emmas, there would be more Nelsons' is the finest possible expression of the chivalrous virtue '*donnoy*,' the subjection of the man-at-arms to his lady. It is unchristian and fantastic—un-English if you will. It may and must be blamed, but it cannot be despised; and there is an element of beauty and nobility in it.

Cervantes is credited with the design of satirising chivalry.

But under all the mean incidents and meaner characters of the novel, we feel that Don Quixote is, and is accounted to be, a hero, putting to shame the silliness of the sane, and the good sense of his matter-of-fact squire. His character outshines its fantastic ornaments. And Sancho Panza's faithfulness is not merely that of a dog or a slave. He has sense enough to know that his master is in the right; and the moral of the book is that the foolishness of an ideal is wiser than the wisdom of the world.

Chivalry receives an illustration also in the life of St. Francis, the knight of holiness. His life is the chivalrous life translated into a higher sphere. Christ is his Amadis or Lancelot, the 'Master' whom he served as squire. Poverty is his lady: and his devotion to both is without limit or reserve.

> Non era ancor molto lontan dall' orto,
> Ch'ei cominciò a far sentir la terra
> Della sua gran virtute alcun conforto;
> Chè per tal donna giovinetto in guerra
> Del padre corse, a cui, com' alla morte,
> La porta del piacer nessun disserra;
> Ed innanzi alla sua spirital corte
> *Et coram patre* le si fece unito;
> Poscia di dì in dì l'amò più forte.
> . . . . . .
> Ma perch' io non proceda troppo chiuso,
> Francesco e Povertà per questi amanti
> Prendi oramai nel mio parlar diffuso.[1]

St. Francis would be as impossible as Sir Galahad without the ideal of knighthood, which is, in one word, service.

It is easy to say that knighthood was an *ignis fatuus*, leading the visionary to a land of chimeras; that it had no relation to the love of God and man, to the misery of the

[1] Dante, *Paradiso*, xi. 55-75.

world and to humble Christian goodness; that it was founded on pride, and at best was but a soldier's virtue, a virtue of paradox. At any rate, it aimed higher than the common scope of the world. The pride of the true knight was pride in his order, not in his own deeds: he did not worship himself or his theories, but was a humble son of the Church: if his obligation of courtesy was too much confined to his own order, it taught him self-control, self-respect, and consideration for the weak; if it did not make his life as pure as the sentiment which he acknowledged, it was better than the gross licence out of which it sprang and against which it protested. The brotherhood of chivalry, contradicted every day by arrogance, self-will, and jealousy, was yet a reality, and bound individuals and nations together; the point of honour, foolishly distorted by sensitiveness of self-assertion, preserved the sanctity of truth, and made meanness infamous; the obligation of courage, whilst it made men quarrelsome, ennobled resistance; pride itself, *parage* not *orgueil*, was a check upon the servility of a society which did not know the meaning of liberty, and in which slavish obedience was the common rule, enforced by all who had power in their hands; liberality, fantastic and extravagant, was more noble than money-getting; the love of ladies, destructive of domestic life and full of false sentiment, was better than the mere animal passion of barbarous Huns, Goths, and Northmen. In a word, the consecration of the Teutonic soldier to a rule of life, a brotherhood and equality of noble service, a discipline of life-long obedience, a sense of personal honour and rectitude, though inferior to the Roman conception of civic virtue, was an education of

those who bore rule in the world, and made them more worthy of the position which they had won and maintained by force, than if they had never bowed to the yoke of the Church and learnt from her teaching the lesson of *noblesse oblige*.

It is not easy to conceive of knighthood, apart from its garnishing, as a reality: but so long as it flourished it was in fact among the most real of institutions. The knightly brotherhood and the Catholic Church were the two principal institutions of the Middle Ages, the embodiment of the love of war, the love of ladies, and the love of God. Desire of political power, personal ambition, greed of money, the development of political and social institutions, the rivalry of classes and races, the growth of a commercial and civic interest, the aims of international trade, were then as always factors in the sum of human motives. But the ruling motives among the dominant class were those connected with chivalry and religion; their dictates were implicitly obeyed, and their rewards and censures regarded above all others.

The passionate devotion to chivalry which belongs to its best age may be seen indicated in the romance of Tristan, where the dying knight says: 'I take leave of chivalry, which I have much loved and honoured. Alas, my sword! what wilt thou do now? Thou wilt leave thy master, never wilt thou have another so good. Wilt thou hear, Sagremor the most shameful word that ever passed the lips of Tristan? . . *I am conquered.* I give thee my arms, I give thee my chivalry.' He kisses the pommel and the blade of his sword, and his shield. 'Ah! why should I die so soon?

Adieu, my good sword! . . . grief makes my heart burst. Sagremor, I deliver to you my heart and my sword: honour them as myself, if you ever loved Tristan.' When Lancelot disguised as the Black Knight discomfits all Arthur's knights, Gawain faints for sorrow. 'Il aymeroit mieulx mourir en ce poinct que veoir toute chevalerie morte et honnye.'[1]

If this is extravagant, it is also genuine, and pitched in a high vein of sentiment. Knighthood thus conceived is something higher than the self-assertion of a dominant aristocracy. Pride is tempered with humility; courage and honour are the accompaniments of loyal service; the knightly *devoir* is free from personal self-exaltation; Galahad and Lancelot become not mere shadows, but types of soldierly excellence and courtesy, exhibited on battle-fields and in the bowers of ladies.

If such was the glory of knighthood, its laws and observances, not only 'achievement high' but 'circumstance of chivalry,' the ceremonies which accompanied it had a like dignity and authority. The men who revered them were neither barbarians nor children, nor even 'noble boys at play.' Their lives were serious, manly, and eventful; their virtues and vice alike pitched in a higher key than our own.

[1] *Lancelot du Lac.* E.E. Text Soc. 1864, 1865.

CHAPTER III

Education, Life in Castles, &c.

Boys of noble birth sent to school at the age of seven—Personal service—Officers at Court—Reciprocal service of lord and vassal—Usage of great households—English lords not feudal princes—The castle and manor-house– Servants and perquisites—Seneschal, Marshal, &c.—Domestic arrangements of a great house—Furniture, plate, and jewels—Hospitality—Retainers and livery—Squires and pages—Instances of courts of nobles and churchmen—Education of pages—French—Learning by heart—Music—Games—Outdoor education—Progress to the estate of squire and knight.

The education of a knight began at an early age. It appears from authorities of the 14th century that boys of noble birth were commonly left under the charge of their mothers till the age of seven. After that age it was the custom to send them to the care of some nobleman or churchman to receive knightly breeding among the squires and pages who served him.[1]

Personal service was the custom of chivalry, and lay at the foundation of all mediaeval institutions. It was no derogation to the dignity of a Prince Elector to bear the cup or wait at the stirrup of the Emperor; the Emperor himself held the bridle of the Pope. The Seneschal,

[1]The origin of this custom may probably be traced to a time when the suzérain took possession of the sons of his vassals as hostages for their fathers' fidelity. Martin, *Hist. de France*, iii. 336.

Me fist avoir en ostage,
Ij vallez de noble lignage.
Roman de Rou.

Marshal, and Constable of the courts of Europe took their titles from acts of personal service, fragments of which continue among ourselves to this day in such observances as the maintenance of a cast of hawks by the Grand Falconer, the challenge of the Champion at the coronation, and till the end of the Stuart period the ceremonious dressing of the king at his *levée*, a custom which was carried to the extreme of etiquette at the French court. The niceties of court ceremonial did not, for the most part, survive the French Revolution; but they are still in force at Madrid, Berlin and Vienna; and every action of the Pope is regulated by traditional ceremony.

The imperial court of the king of the Franks became the model of other courts; and offices, all originally involving personal service. were multiplied. The lesser lords in their degree followed the custom of the king, not by way of imitation, but because it was natural to do so. The household of a feudal Seigneur was organised in the same manner as the court of a sovereign prince. Similar usages existed also in the religious houses, where the Abbot or Prior was served by the knights and gentlemen who held lands of him by feudal tenure, or were maintained in his service as mercenaries.[1] The Abbot of St. Denys never moved from his Abbey without a Chamberlain and a Marshal, whose offices (as well as that of the Butler) were held as fiefs, and could, no doubt be transferred and transmitted like any other property.

[1] Archiepiscopi, episcopi, comites, barones et milites suos et proprios servientes suos, scilicet dapiferos, pincernas, camerarios, coquos, pistores, sub suo frithborgo habebant. *Laws of King Edward*, (Stubbs, *Select Charters*, p. 75).

Personal service was symbolical of the obligation to serve in war, which was the principal characteristic of feudal land-tenure; the vassal was bound to serve his lord in the field, he might also be called upon to serve at home; in return for domestic service the lord gave his dependant board and lodging and the advantage of sharing in his opportunities of military distinction and royal or princely favour. No money wage was needed in a state of society in which all the wants of ordinary life were provided at home; but the attendants of the lord received his largesse, and got their share of his plunder in public or private war. It is not to be supposed that the many landowners who held of an overlord habitually lived at his court; they had their own manor houses and granges to live in, and their own estates to govern; and none but the greatest lords cared to have a number of idle gentlemen hanging about and making trouble with neighbours. Nor did the lord reside at one house only, nor in the principal fortress, except in time of danger. The term 'castle' includes country houses great and small. 'The mediæval baron removed from one to another of his castles with a train of servants and baggage, his chaplains and accountants, steward and carvers, servers, cupbearers, clerks, squires, yeomen, grooms and pages, chamberlain, treasurer, and even chancellor.'[1] Till the 17th century, if not later, not only the king, but his principal barons also, lived from house to house, carrying with them not only plate and personal baggage, but also beds, chairs, hangings and bedding. Purveyance and the rights and customs which attended it made the residence of the court burdensome to the

[1]Stubbs, *Const. Hist.* iii. §. 473.

neighbourhood, and caused courts to be frequently shifted.

The custom of holding court (*tenir cour*) extended from the king downwards to all whose wealth or dignity allowed it, and such courts were centres of chivalry wherever they existed. If they were less conspicuous in England than in other countries, it was because the English kings after the Conquest never allowed earldoms to be set up in rivalry to their own power. The feudal system (as Freeman taught us with exaggerated emphasis), was never established in England so completely as in France and Germany. Technically, all land was held by military tenure, and all law was subject to the King's law. But the military service did not represent the whole value of the land: much land was undervalued by 'beneficial hidation,'[1] much was held by ancient English usage; and the customs attaching to it were respected by the King's judges, who preferred common law to royal ordinance; and in fact hampered legislation in the interest of custom. The freeholder was obscured but not abolished by feudal usages or fictions. English life was founded on a state of peace, not of war.

The feudal institutions, as brought into England by William I, and developed in the following century, gave more direct power to the king than was the case on the Continent, where (for instance) the Duke of Normandy was little less than an independent sovereign, owning only a formal allegiance to the King of France, his suzerain, and himself the uneasy lord of turbulent barons. Hence it resulted that great houses in England were courts of lords

[1] *i.e.*, rated below its value.

EMPEROR SERVED AT TABLE.—Harl. 4372, *f* 215.

[*Face page 51.*

not of princes; the bond of lord and vassal was not so close; the great barons were less magnificent; and the colour of English chivalry was of a soberer hue than on the Continent, where peers of France and German barons were constantly engaged in private war, and the chances of military distinction were consequently more frequent; whilst the passage of troubadours from court to court, the greater prominence of tournaments, the excitement of border warfare, and proximity to the great events and personages of the time, gave a splendour and gaiety to chivalry which could be matched in England only by the court of the king himself.

Among the incidents of service, besides the obligation to take the field under the lord's banner, were various personal duties, rendered as the acknowledgment of land tenure, and covered by the same term, *militare*, which in mediæval Latin is equivalent to the English 'serve' and 'service.'[1] The requirements of the lord did not stop at the obligation of serving in arms for a certain number of days, and the daily offices of his personal attendants. They included also rights connected with the mill, the pigeon house, the cultivation of the demesne, the administration of justice, and the supply of the castle with food, firewood, and all that was required for daily use; and fiefs were held on condition of discharging these services. It is one of the characteristics of mediaeval life that mutual offices were arranged, not according to the conveniences of the parties, but according to their rights. The history of feudalism, in small and great matters, it is to a large extent a history not of interests but of rights.[2]

[1] Ducange, s. vv. *miles*, *militare*. [2] Stubbs, *Lectures on Modern History*.

We may notice in passing that no feudal lord, from the king downwards, could rid himself of an inconvenient domestic or vassal, so long as he performed his feudal duty. Indeed the idea of free contract according to money payment, apart from all considerations of right or sentiment, is entirely modern.[1] This security of tenure must have caused much inconvenience and trial of temper. We are reminded of Sanch Panza and his physician, without whose leave he might not taste of any of the dishes set before him; of the King of Spain who was roasted to death because the officer who had the right to move the king's chair was not present; of the Queen of Spain who was dragged by the stirrup becaused no one dared to touch her sacred person. The lord might whip his fool or pull his coat over his ears, if his jests were inconvenient; but he could not secure himself against the repetition of the offence, and the laugh was always on the fool's side.

Akin to ceremony, and of a wasteful and vexatious character, was the rule of perquisites. The king's champion had the cup of gold out of which he pledged the king at his coronation. The robes, chair, cushion and other furniture of a knight of the Garter at his installation were till this century the perquisites of Garter and the Dean and canons of Windsor; and Dugdale gravely records a squabble between himself, as Garter, and the Dean, for the possession of the hassock on which a new knight had knelt. When the Frankish noble visited the Emperor at Constantinople, he dropped his mantle on the Emperor's coming into the audience chamber, and it became the perquisite of one of the attendants. All

[1] See Scott's *Old Mortality*, note to Chap. IV.

the furniture of a death-chamber went to the servants; and the body of Edward III was left with hardly enough to cover it. The horses and armour of knights defeated in the jousts belonged to the victor, and were given to him and his squires.

As fiefs passed by heredity—though this was no part of the original institution—the offices also became hereditary; and in the decay of feudalism such offices as those of Great Chamberlain, Grand Falconer,[1] Earl Marshal, Champion, were retained as hereditary property in families, apart from the lands to which they had been formerly attached.

Among the officers, great and small, of a lord's castle was the Seneschal or majordomo (*Senescallus*, *Dapifer*).[2] As with the great offices of state, the original meaning of this became obsolete, though the privileges remained. Thus the Elector Palatine was always Seneschal (*Truchsess*) of the Empire; the Count of Anjou, of France; the Sieur de Joinville, of Champagne; and the office carried with it lands and 'Franchise' or legal jurisdiction.

Other officers were the Master of the Horse, or Marshal,[3] the chief huntsman and chief falconer, besides the inferior domestics, such as butler, pantler, manciple, clerk of the kitchen, and the menial servants. These services were rendered by nobles at the king's court, and in the houses of of great lords, lay and clerical, they were places of more or less dignity. The household of a noble was self-supporting and independent of external help to a degree which it is difficult to conceive in days of easy supplies and rapid

[1] Ducange, s. v. *Falconarius*. [2] Selden, *Tit. Hon.* II. 656, 695, 840.
[3] *Mar-schalk* = horse-servant.

communication. A Roman noble's villa with its array of slaves was managed in somewhat the same way; but the idea of noble service was unknown to the ancients.

A great house had its own cornlands and pasture, its stacks of corn and hay, granaries and storehouses of all kinds, mills, cattle byres, slaughter-houses and salting-sheds; if the cloth which the household wore was not woven at home, at least the sheep were shorn there, and the wool went to be sold or exchanged for cloth at the nearest staple town. Wool was carded and spun, cloth woven.

A remnant of this custom may be seen in the great number of places which were given away or sold atcourt, down to the time when they were abolished by Burke's bill of 1782. The same thing may be observed in foreign courts; the smallest German prince maintained scores of useless retainers, body guards, masters of the ceremonies and their deputies, chamberlains, ushers, lacqueys, cooks, running footmen, huntsmen, musicians. All this was in the spirit of the Middle Ages. We read of *Valez trenchans* (carvers), *valez servans de vin*, *servans de l'escuelle*, *valets de porte*[1] etc., some of them boys and youths serving their apprenticeship for chivalry as wards of their lord, or sent by their parents to be trained with companions of their own age and condition.

The whole society of masters and servants dined and supped in the hall, and slept within the walls. Whatever was not of home manufacture was conveyed from the wood, the quarry, or the town by pack-horses and barges, or bought from itinerant chapmen, or at the fairs held at

[1] Du Cange, s. v. *Valetus*.

every large market town yearly or oftener, to some of which foreign merchants repaired from the Hanse towns, the Netherlands, Germany, France and Italy. Here were bought spices, iron goods, salt, silks, and furs, Flemish cloth, Spanish and French wine, and any other goods which could not be manufactured on the spot or bought in the towns of England.[1]

It appears from the accounts kept in household books, many of which have been preserved, that the everyday life led in mediæval castles, monasteries, and manor houses, was organised in a multitude of departments, each presided over by its own officers and worked by its own staff; the buttery, the kitchen, the napery, the pantry, the chandlery, and so forth.[2] According to the scale of the house, some of these officers would be gentlemen, some servants. The master of the meals in King Arthur's hall was Sir Kay or Keus, one of the knights of the Round Table. This is fable, but in agreement with fact. No kind of service was ignoble in itself; but the service of the hall, the armoury, the tiltyard, the stable, the park and all that concerned hunting and hawking was eminently noble.

Enough has been said to show that a wealthy nobleman had within the walls of his own dwelling as much of the comforts and luxuries of life, as they were then understood, as would make it a desirable place of sojourn for those who by birth or choice were his dependents.

Apart from the providing of things of daily use, the lord's house was also a place of leisure and amusement. All that concerned the sports of the field, the stable and

[1] See *Social England.* [2] Stubbs, *Const. Hist.*, iii. §470, 473.

the tilt-yard, was a matter of closer interest to knights and squires, and in some degree to ladies also, than the provision of material necessaries, food, drink, clothing, and marketable goods.

It was the custom in the Middle Ages, as in Imperial Rome, to multiply services and servants in order to enhance the dignity of their master. At a time when intercourse with foreign countries was difficult, and the taste for spending did not find easy satisfaction, whilst at the same time much wealth, the produce of agriculture and grazing, was often accumulated in a single hand, rich men did not know what to do with their substance. They amassed great store of gold and silver plate, jewels, furs and precious raiment. Sir John Arundel, who was drowned in 1380, lost 'not only his life but all his apparel to his body,' fifty-two suits of gold. The Black Prince left an immense treasure of gold and silver, plate and jewels, besides rich beds and their furniture, cloth of arras embroidered with 'mermyns de mer,' swans, eagles, and griffins; 'grand tresor, draps, chivalx, argent et or';[1] the household stuff of Piers Gaveston is on a like scale[2] and mediæval wills, of which a large number are extant, resemble in their degree that of the Black Prince.

The most obvious and the least invidious form of expenditure was in keeping house. Hospitality was set high among social virtues, as it is in all rude societies. There is much talk of eating and drinking in *fabliaux* and *romans*. An English lord kept open house all the year round; as the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Durham did within the memory of man. The feasts of kings and great

[1] Will of the Black Prince. Stanley, *Memorials of Canterbury* p. 168.
[2] Rymer, *Fœdera* t.r. Ed. ii.

prelates were incredibly extravagant. Richard Earl of Cornwall is said to have entertained 30,000 guests at his marriage;[1] if we divide the number by ten, it is still large. Variety of fare was afforded by the wide tracts of moorland, forest, and fen, in which game of every kind was plentiful, from red deer and wild swine to coneys, from cranes and swans to larks. Droves of oxen, sheep and swine, thousands of wild fowl, deer, and roebuck, salmon, pike and carp, were slaughtered for these festivities, conduits ran with wine, and innumerable hogsheads of beer were broached.

Among the chief glories of a rich man was to be able to shew a great number of retainers wearing his coats and living at his expense; and thus the castle swarmed with idle hangers-on, Will Wimbles and Caleb Balderstones, glad to earn their keep by performing light duties about the stable and the armoury. The abuse of 'livery'[2] had to be met by legislation, and was only put down by the despotic rule of Edward IV and Henry VII. 'The baron could not reign as king in his castle, but he could make his castle as strong and splendid as he chose; he could not demand the military services of his vassals for private war, but he could, if he chose to pay for it, support a vast household of men armed and liveried as servants, a retinue of pomp and splendour, but ready for any opportunity of disturbance.'[3]

[1] *Social England* II. 389.

[2] Livery (*liberatura*) properly means 'allowance.' A certain amount of cloth was served out anually to each member of the household in his degree. Within the present century (for instance) the Provost, fellows, scholars and servants of Eton College had their 'livery' measured, cut and delivered to them every year by the Bursar; 20 yards for the Provost, 10 for each fellow, and so on. There were similar 'allowances' of beer, bread, 'bavin and billet' for firing, etc.

[3] Stubbs, *Const: Hist:* iii. § 469.

Here came in the personal service of the knights, squires, and pages who ate at the lord's table. It is not to be supposed that knights attended to their own arms and horses; it was enough for them to see that their accoutrements and those of their lords were kept in good trim by the squires and the army of grooms and helpers employed in the castle.

The son of a knight or gentleman who was thus sent to school was during his apprenticeship known as a page[1] or henchman,[2] and was under the orders of a squire called the Master of the henchmen. The apprenticeship began at an early age, so soon the boy was removed from the care of 'nourrices et gouvernantes,' perhaps at the age of seven, and lasted seven years, during which time he lived much with the ladies, but was also learning the business of a squire in the stable, the armoury, the kennels and hawk-pens, and the hall. At the age of 14 the boy was old enough to wear a collar of SS and be entitled squire.

Pages waited at table, as choristers nowadays wait in the Halls at Winchester, Oxford and Cambridge. The institution of fagging in our public schools is a relic of mediæval service: and till some thirty years ago junior scholars under the title of 'servitor' waited on their seniors in Hall at Eton and took their own dinner in true mediæval fashion when their masters had done. Philip the Hardy, son of John the Good, King of France, waited on his father during his captivity. Joinville, being a great lord, carved for the King of Navarre in the hall of Lewis IX as a squire, 'for

[1] *Page* from *paedagogium*, a training-school: *pagii*, *paedagogarii* (Ducange.)

[2] *Henchman*. Henchman = haunch-man.

I had not yet put on the hauberk,' *i.e.* had not received the honour of knighthood; and he tells how he himself took in the son of a poor crusader, and brought him up in his own house.

The pages, henchmen or *damoiseaux* (*domiselli*) also called *varlets* (*valeti* or *vallecti*, *vasseletti*, young vassals) were chiefly boys of noble or knightly birth, brought to the castle to learn 'courtesy'[1] (*curialitas*) *i.e.* the breeding learnt at the court (*curia*) of a prince or noble. 'Exemplar morum domibus procedit eorum,' says Walter Map (1150). From the highest ranks to the lowest degrees of gentry this was the custom. Innumerable instances might be given, both historical and from the notices in literature. To take a few—Stephen of Blois, afterwards King of England, was nurtured by his uncle Henry I. Malcolm King of Scots was brought up at the court of Henry II. Henry II himself lived at Bristol in the house of his uncle Robert Earl of Gloucester, who appointed a clerk, Master Matthew, as his governor. Henry VI was put under the care of Richard Beauchamp Earl of Warwick, and the heirs of baronies in the crown's wardship were brought up with him (as was the common practice in the king's court); so that his court became 'an academy (*gymnasium*) for the young nobility.'[2] Fulk Fitz Warren was brought up at the court of Henry II to be companion to his boys. We are not surprised to hear that John quarrelled with him, and when Fulk kicked the prince in the chest ('en my le pys') made complaint to his father; who (we are glad to learn) 'apela son mestre e ly fest batre

[1] (*Ordre de la Chevalerie;* Ste. Palaye I. n. 47). 'Tout chevalie doit son fils mettre en service d'autre chevalier, afin qu'il apprenne tailler à table et à servir, et à armer et habiller chevalier en sa jeunnesse.

[2] (Fortescue *de laudibus legg: Angl:* I. 373).

fyrement e bien pur sa pleynte'; for which John hated him ever after, and took away his lands. Thereupon Fulk 's'en parti de la court e vynt à son hostel,' taking to the woods afterwards, and making free with the king's men and merchants who did business with them.

The same practice was followed by the owners of castles and great houses spiritual and secular, both in England and in other countries. Jean de Saintré was brought up at the Hotel of the Seigneur de Preuilli, and passed thence to the court of King John the Good. Montaigne (iii. 175) says 'C'est un bel usage de notre nation, qu'aus bonnes maisons nos enfans soient reçeus pour y etre nourris et élevés pages comme en une eschole de noblesse.'[1] Froissart gives a lively picture of the Court of the Count of Foix. 'On veoit en la salle, en la chambre, en la cour, chevaliers et escuyers d'honneur,[2] aller et marcher, et les oyoit-on parler d'armes et d'amour; tout honneur étoit là-dedans trouvé: toute novelle, de quelque pays ne de quelque pays ne de quelque royaulme que ce fust, là-dedans on y aprenoit; car de tout pays, pour la vaillance du seigneur, elles y venoient.'

Bishops and abbots were served in the same way by noble youths sent to them by their parents or guardians, as well as by the young clerks whom they brought up to become chaplains, scholars and churchmen. Fitz Stephen, the biographer of St. Thomas of Canterbury, says, 'the nobles of the realm of England and of neighbouring kingdoms used to send their sons to serve the Chancellor (Thomas), whom he trained with honourable bringing up and learning; and when they had received the knight's belt,[3] sent them back

[1] Ste. Palaye I. n. 7, 9. [2] So *vin d'honneur*. [3] *i.e.* gone through the stages of page and squire. See Furnivall "Forewords" E.E.T.S., 1867).

with honour to their fathers.' Thomas himself had been educated in the palace of Archbishop Theobald. Roger of Hoveden (writing about 1180) tells us that William Longchamps, Bishop of Ely, was served by the sons of nobles (filios nobilium procerum regni . . . secum habuit domisellos [*damoiseaux*]). Robert Grosteste Bishop of Lincoln (circ. 1220) said that he himself, though of humble birth, had learnt courtesy 'in domo seu hospitio majorum regum quam sit rex Angliae,' meaning thereby David and Solomon. Among those whom Grosteste himself nurtured were Henry and Almeric de Montfort, the sons of Earl Simon.[1] Richard, the son of Henry I was *festive nutritus* by Robert Bloett, Bishop of Lincoln (1094-1123).

This practice continued throughout the Middle ages. Robert Whiting, the last abbot of Glastonbury, Cardinal Morton (among whose pages was Sir Thomas More) kept it up, and there was 'a mess of the young lords' at Wolsey's table;[2] among them the eldest son of the Earl of Northumberland. The Duke of Norfolk and the Earl of Northampton at the same date were both 'bred as pages with bishops.' The chevalier Bayard was page to his uncle the Bishop of Grenoble, and served as his cupbearer when he dined with the Duke of Savoy. Some boys were brought up at home; Ordericus Vitalis (circ. 1100) for instance, whose master was Siward, a noble priest. Gaston de Foix served his father with all the meats, tasting each first himself. Chaucer's squire was

> 'curteys . . . lowly and servisable,
> And carf before his fadur at the table.'[3]

[1] H. of Huntingdon. [2] Cavendish, *Life of Wolsey*.
[3] *Canterbury Tales: Prologue*.

Besides the schools attached to cathedrals, religious houses and the palaces of bishops and abbots, literature was not wholly neglected by the secular lords who received boys into their houses. To read and write, to play the harp and sing were part of a knight's accomplishment, and there were unbeneficed clerks and needy troubadours who were glad to get some teaching to do. The ladies of the castle also took interest in the boys who came to be instructed, teaching them letters, the games of chess and tables, the rules of good manners, and the rudiments of gallantry.

We may set against Scott's

> Thanks to St. Bothan, son of mine,
> Save Gawain, ne'er could pen a line[1]

another couplet;—

> Mon filz si est bien letrez,
> et en touz livres bien lisanz.

Robert I of France was 'very learned in humane letters.' Henry Beauclerc, according to Freeman, knew Greek.[2] Galbert[3] tells us that Charles the Good, Count of Flanders, was reading his prayers in church when he was murdered (1124). Though Du Guesclin would not learn to read and write, it was not for want of opportunities. Garin le Loherain in the romance could read ('de letres sot'.)

[1] *Marmion*, vi. 15.

[2] This surprising statement rests upon the authority of Marie de France, who (according to one reading of the text) speaks of "li rois Henris" as having translated Aesop into English. She probably means Henry III, who was her contemporary, and who, though there is no reason to suppose that he knew Greek, had men about him who did, such as Grosteste and his *protégé* John of Basingstoke, the pupil of Roger Bacon, Freeman. *Wm. Rufus* Vol. IV., Appx. EE.

[3] *Vie de Charles le Bon.*

AMUSEMENTS: ABOVE, TENNIS AND CHESS; BELOW, MUSIC.—Harl. 4375, *f* 151.

KNIGHTS PLAYING CHESS.—Harl. 4431, *f* 135.

[*Face page 62.*

It is not to be supposed that the kings and ecclesiastics who made their mark on a piece of parchment were always illiterate. The seal was what gave a document validity; the mark was evidence of the persona presence of the witnesses (*signando affuerunt.*)[1] Lords and ladies, and particularly the latter, could read and write. Those who had no learning could do without it, in a time when the chief part of every kind of business was discharged by word of mouth.

The knight in the romance says—

> Bele, nous nous entramions
> Quant à l'escole aprenions;
> L'uns à l'autre son bon disoit
> En Latin, nus ne l'entendoit.[2]

If Latin was little studied except by clerks, French was for some centuries after the Conquest the language of the court, or at least was the common language of the court, and was a subject of teaching. The stock of books in a great house was very small. Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, the founder of the University Library at Oxford, and a great lover of books, had some 200.[3] Books were rare and expensive; but the growth of a manuscript literature of a popular kind is some

[1] It is hardly worth mentioning that the expression 'to sign' is properly 'to seal'. In the library of Eton College is a deed signed by William II with a cross, and sealed with the Great Seal '*Rex Guillelmus Regis Guillelmi filius coram baronibus suis sigillo suo firmavit.*' The crosses of the barons and prelates follow that of the king; the names are added by the clerk.

[2] This must have been like Lucentio's wooing in the *Taming of the Shrew.*

[3] Duke Humphrey gave 129 books to Oxford, three of which are now in the Bodleian, and some few more in various colleges, the British Museum, and at Paris.

proof of a reading public. School teaching was oral, and the only book possessed by the scholar was his copy of the lesson written by his own hand. Learning by heart formed a principal part of education; poetry, manuals of history, grammar and heraldry were committed to memory. The common manual of good manners which all young people studied was a Latin treatise called '*Stans puer ad mensam*' ascribed to Robert Grosteste Bishop of Lincoln,[1] which was translated into French and English.

The principal part of a boy's education, however, was carried on out of doors. All kinds of exercises and games were practised, such as wrestling, boxing, running, riding, tilting at the ring and the quintain; and such amusements as bull and bear-baiting. The squires who had charge of the pages or henchmen were required to 'lerne them to ryde clenely and surely, to draw them also to justes, to lerne them were their harness, to have all curtesy in wordes, dedes and degrees . . . moreover to teche them sondry languages and other lerninges vertuous, to harping, to pipe, sing, dance . . . . with corrections in their chambers.'[4] These 'corrections' were an important part of the training, and the life of a scholar was full of hardship. In Henry

[1] 'Haec qui me docuit *Grosum Caput* est sibi nomen' (Wright, *Homes of Other Days*).

[2] In King Horn, the boy is handed over to the steward;—

"Stiwarde, tak nu here
Mi fundlyng for to lere
Of thine mestere
Of wude and of revere;[3]
Horn thu underfonge,
And tech him of harpe and songe."

(See Warton, *Hist. of Poetry*, iii. 9).

[3] river,' *i.e.*, hawking. [4] Furnivall, 'Forewords' E.E.T.S., 1867.

CEREMONY OF CONFERRING KNIGHTHOOD.—Cott. Nero D 1, *f* 3.

ARMING KNIGHTS.—Add. MSS. 12,228, *f* 125.

PEACOCK AT FEAST: from *Le Livre du Paon*.—Add. 30,869, *f* 1.

[*Face page 65.*

VI's deed of appointment of his nurse Dame Alice Butler is a proviso that she is to have power 'to chastise us reasonably from time to time.'

The name of squire, (*scutarius*, *escuyer*, *armiger*) was given both to gentlemen attendant on a knight who aimed at no higher grade of chivalry, and to youths, the sons of knights and to be knights in their turn, who came to learn the business of arms and courtesy from their seniors. The chief part of the service was discharged by the squires, old and young, and pages; who had under them grooms, huntsmen, and domestic menials. The squires (as we have seen) carved in Hall; they also handed vessels of plate and served wine, followed by the varlets or pages bearing the dishes. They gave water for the guests' hands after dinner :—

> Apres le manger laverent ;
> Escuier de l'eve (eau) donerent ;[1]

they made the beds for their lords,

> Les lits firent li escuier ;
> Si coucha chacuns son seignor ;

helped them to dress ;

> Si e dozel (damoiseaux) l'ainderain gen á vestir ;

groomed the horses and saw to the armour. The Squire brought his lord the sleeping draught (*vin de coucher*) of *piment* or *clairet*; slept in his chamber if he desired it, or at the door; a custom which continued as late as the times of the Stuarts.

[1] Ste. Palaye i. n. 32, 33.

The Squire was to serve his knight in everything; to arm him for the tourney or the battle, and to see that all his arms and accoutrements were in perfect condition; to be up early and late, and never consider his own convenience. In the tournament the squire had to provide his 'master' with fresh lances, and to hold the horses and keep them for fighting, and to take part in the *mêlée*. In battle the two squires who attended a knight fought at his side and supplied him at need with fresh arms or horses.[1]

Among the services required of *damoiseaux* and squires was that of waiting on the ladies in the castle; and this service was no less honourable than that rendered to their lords. They played chess in the ladies' bowers, walked with them in the garden, rode hunting and hawking with them; and scandal was not unfrequently caused, justly or unjustly, by the freedom of intercourse which mediæval manners allowed.

When the page had passed to the condition of squire, and had there learnt all knightly duties—no easy education, for squires were hard upon pages, and knights upon squires—he might aspire to the dignity of knighthood, if he could approve himself worthy. Squires were as eager as their lords for opportunities of distinction in tournaments or in war, and it was not every squire that could hope to take up knighthood. Knighthood indeed was a costly burden, and the poor gentleman had to content himself with the lower grade of chivalry. This fact is recognised in our institutions by the computation of a knight's fee at twenty pounds a year in landed property. Many squires, therefore, though

[1] *destrier* (*dextrarius*) is the warhorse led by the squire on his right.

of noble blood and in other respects fit to take up knighthood, were content with the lower condition, and never assumed the honours and responsibilities of knighthood.

CHAPTER IV

War

War the business of a knight—Chivalry the period of the mailed horseman—Goths the first to use cavalry as their chief arm—Battle of Adrianople, 378 A.D.—Proper use of cavalry—Frankish cavalry—Northmen and Normans—English—Tumultuary character of early mediæval war—The Crusaders—Edward I at Lewes and Evesham—the mail-clad horseman—The Crusades—Want of organisation and discipline—Combination of infantry and archery to oppose heavy cavalry—The longbow, the English yeoman's weapon—Edward I in Wales and Scotland—Falkirk and Bannockburn—Wars of Edward III—Crécy—Decline of English archery—Rise of mercenary troops—Free companies—Indentures—Royal commisions—*Condottieri*—New art of war, displacing knights in armour—Excesses of free companies—English chivalry not furnished with castles—Hence little of private war—England a peaceful nation—Castles built by Normans and held for the king—The Barons' War—Government of Edward I—Scutage—Militia—English nobles comparatively little practised in war.

The art and practice of mediæval warfare does not come directly within the limits of this work. But warfare was the principal occupation of the knight, whether for business or pleasure; the heyday of chivalry was the period during which cavalry was in the ascendant, and its decline was chiefly due to that development of the art of war which gave the issue of battles to infantry and artillery rather than cavalry, and made the conduct of campaigns and sieges a matter of calculation rather than of personal prowess. It is

therefore necessary to give a short sketch of military history during the chivalric period, *i.e.* from the 10th to the 15th or 16th century. The cavalry period, however, dates from a time far anterior to chivalry.

The battle of Adrianople between the Romans and the Goths, 378 A.D., is cited by Mr. Oman in his *History of the Art of War*[1] as the first, the battle of Marignano, 1515, as the last of the triumphs of the mediæval horseman.

At Adrianople the imperial infantry, no longer able, by the use of superior armour, discipline, and individual skill and courage, to keep the Gothic cavalry at a distance, but driven in upon itself and huddled together in a helpless mass, was destroyed by the Gothic cavalry breaking in upon its flank. Where cavalry can be brought into the field in sufficient numbers, and the opposing infantry are not well provided with archers, slingers or javelin men, they can ride infantry down, unless, as in the Macedonian or the Swiss phalanx, the front of pikes is too deep to be broken through

But cavalry is useful for attack, not for defence. 'The horse,' it has been said, 'is the weapon;' the impact of a mass of men and horses at full speed is what tells. Wounded horses encumber and endanger a defensive position. The main use of cavalry, then, is not to hold but to gain a position; and when infantry have to resist cavalry, it must be done by the employment of archery (or musketry) to weaken the attack whilst it is being delivered, and before it can be driven home. A modern instance of the weakness of cavalry for defence is that of the Russian horse at Balaklava, which broke up under the charge of the

[1] pp. 13, 14.

English heavy brigade. The lesson of mediæval warfare, learnt and forgotten on innumerable fields, was the right use of archers and infantry against cavalry: but the feudal pride of the man-at-arms was proof against conviction until horse and foot bowed before the power of artillery.

The Franks who overran the Gaulish provinces fought on foot, armed with spear, sword, and battle axe, the formidable *francisca* or tomahawk, more effective when thrown than at close quarters. By degrees the Franks adopted the use of the horse and of body-armour. The shirt of mail (*brunia*, the A. S. *byrnie*) was worn by all cavalry from the 6th century onward, and the Franks became more and more a nation of horsemen. But at Poictiers (732) the old tactics prevailed, and the Moslem light horse were met and routed, not by counter charges of cavalry, but by a solid phalanx of infantry and dismounted cavalry, built up 'like a wall, or as if frozen together into a belt of ice;' dismounted cavalry standing by the side of the infantry.

The Danish raiders, arriving suddenly and departing as suddenly, taught the menaced nation how little trust was to be placed in national levies, ill armed, undisciplined, slow to muster, and soon dispersed. Before the English Ealdorman could get the men of the shire together, or the Frankish lord collect his dependants, the Dane had come up the river, beached his keels, seized all the horses in the neighbourhood, burnt villages, manors and abbeys, and was gone again with his plunder and his captives.

The Danes, when they had advanced from raiding to the maintenance of dyked and stockaded forts, and from forts to settlements in tracts of land, being the best soldiers of

their time, and having an unusual aptitude for the adoption of new ideas, beat the Franks at their own weapons. To meet the Frankish cavalry, the Scandinavian settlers in Gaul learnt to fight on horseback; and by the beginning of the 11th century the Norman cavalry was the best in Europe.

The English made little use of cavalry before the Conquest. The 'hard hand-play' of Ashdown (871) Ethandun (878) and Brunanburh (937) was a combat of axes and short swords (*seaxe*) hewing down the shield-wall, behind which stood the chiefs, dismounted. The same simple tactics were followed at Stamford Bridge and Hastings, (1066) where Harold and Gurth fought on foot. Whilst the shield-wall formation, whether in line, ring, or triangle, remained unbroken, the cavalry were at a disadvantage; for the horse will not easily face a double or triple hedge of pikes; the squares at Waterloo are a modern instance. If the cavalry could force an entrance, as at Stamford Bridge and at Hastings, the infantry were at their mercy. The varieties of battles are infinite; in some the infantry largely outnumber the cavalry, in some the proportion is reversed; some are combats of cavalry alone, in others archers and slingers decide the day. Horse prevailed over foot in the cavalry period, because that arm was highly organised, and generals gave little attention to the handling of infantry; the importance of infantry was increased with the development of archery.

The English levies, untrained and half-armed, were, when opposed to the Danes, as militia against regular soldiers. The Danes met the natives, whenever they gathered head,

with broadsword, spear, and battle-axe. Every Northman considered himself a match for three enemies—from four he might fly without discredit.[1]

Mediæval warfare thus organised itself as cavalry; and battles were mainly decided by charges of knights in mail slaughtering hosts of infantry, or were contests of cavalry alone, whether in the field or in the streets of a town. The battle of Bouvines (1215) was 'a huge scramble and scuffle of men and horses;'[2] 'a vast tourney,' diversified like a Homeric fight by 'an infinite number of single combats.' The battle of Val ès Dunes (1047) was 'little more than a fierce combat of horse surging backwards and forwards over the slopes of the upland on which it was fought.'[3]

In fact, the description of a mediæval battle is the description of feats of arms done by the captains. A battle was a tournament on a grander and more dangerous scale, in which, besides the chance of death and wounds, the knight ran the risk of being butchered by the '*ribauds*' who despatched the wounded after the mailed cavalry had swept by, or thrown into a dungeon where rats and mice (as Du Guesclin said,[4]) were more plentiful than song-birds. The honour to be gained was greater in proportion; and devotion to a sovereign or liege lord, to the Christian cause against the infidel, and to some extent and in some cases patriotism, as in the wars between France and England, or between England and Scotland, was a less incentive to deeds of prowess than personal pride and the love of ladies.

[1] Green, *Conquest of England*, Chapters ii, iii, pp. 54, 90.
[2] Oman, p. 51, *Art of War*, p. 472. [3] Green, *Conquest of England*, p. 506.
[4] Petitot, *Mémoires*, vol. iv.

The knights of the Temple and the Hospital, of Calatrava and St. James, showed their prowess in the battles of the crusaders in the East and in Spain; overthrowing the Paynim cavalry by sheer weight of man and horse, battle meeting battle, and champions doing great feats of arms. At Mansourah, the last pitched battle of the Crusades (1251), the Count of Artois had no better plan of battle than to charge the Saracens as soon as he came in sight of them, without waiting for the main body to come up, regardless of the promise made to his brother, King Lewis. Squadron after squadron charged and was destroyed in detail, either in the open field, or in the narrow streets of the town. If Artois had waited to allow the whole army to assemble, and the enemy had then been engaged with infantry, cross-bowmen and horse, a great victory would have been won, and 'Islam would have been ruined,' as the Moslem historians themselves confess. The battle of Lewes was lost by the desire of Prince Edward to avenge upon the Londoners an insult offered to his mother, which led him, like his descendant Rupert, into a headlong charge far away from the main scene of action. De Montfort, the next year, was defeated at Evesham by a simple strategical combination; and his army was destroyed by a force numerous enough to engage them at once in front and rear. Had Edward's troops come on in one mass, a charge of the baronial cavalry might have checked them, or even broken through. Yet even this plain device was claimed by Montfort as his own. 'By the arm of St. James,' he cried, 'I taught them how to fight.' This battle, like others, was but a *mêlée* of cavalry in which numbers prevailed, as they

must where there is no surprise, no reserve, no supports of archery or other long-range weapons, no unexpected and effective charge, and where one party is as skilled as the other.

'*Chevaucher*' is the whole duty of a gentleman in arms, according to Froissart. Like 'a certain lord' in Shakespeare's Henry IV, he looks upon the disturbance of the knightly *mêlée* by infantry *(ribauds, brigands à pied)* and archers, as 'great pity.'

We pause for a moment to consider what a magnificent military engine, within its limits, the mounted knight or man-at-arms must have been. None but the heaviest horses could carry riders weighted from head to foot with chain armour, and bearing shield, lance, sword, and sometimes axe and mace. Such a horse and man weighed many hundreds of pounds, and the shock of a body of them charging together was irresistible. When arrived at close quarters, the knight was a skilled fighter, trained all his life in horsemanship and the use of arms. He was one of an exclusive class, raised above all others; he was animated, within his own class, by a spirit of the keenest personal rivalry; love and war combined to exalt his courage; and he was often the servant of God fighting the battle of the Cross against the infidel, and confident of salvation if he fell.

Although throughout the Middle Ages there was no school of military science, contact with the East was not without its effect upon the art of war. In military organisation, as in all the arts of life, the Byzantines of the 11th century were far ahead of the Western nations. They had

SQUIRES SUPPORTING SHIELDS.—Add. 12228, *f* 70.

KNIGHTS IN FULL ARMOUR (12TH OR 13TH CENT.).—Reg. 20 A v, *f* 16.

KNIGHTS ARMED FOR TOURNAMENT.—Add. 12228, *f* 75.

[*Face page 75.*

preserved the Roman tradition of castrametation; they had siege trains, and even ambulances and surgeons; they arranged their forces in battle so as to support and assist each other; and the whole art of building, attacking and defending castles was brought back from the East into Europe, where as yet it hardly existed.

The Crusades provided a new school of war. The soldiers of the Cross had everything to learn. Effective discipline was almost unknown among them; combination of forces in subordination to a general in chief, and support of one arm by another, if dreamed of by a few captains, were liable to be disconcerted by any obstinate or hot-headed lord of a few hundred men-at-arms. Mediæval nobles were as jealous of each other, and as unwilling to obey a common leader, as the Grecian chiefs who fought against Xerxes. They were as quarrelsome as dogs, as impracticable as field-deputies, as punctilious as ambassadors. The Templars would fight nowhere but on the right wing, and in like manner the Knights of St. John claimed the left. A count disdained to serve under a baron, a duke under a count, a German under a Frenchman or Englishman. The Flemish knights at Bouvines refused to charge a body of infantry because they were not gentlemen, and so lost the battle. The memoirs of Villehardouin and Joinville, as well as those of Froissart and Monstrelet, are full of the records of the pride and ill-temper which endangered the greatest objects of the campaigns they describe. The want of discipline, as well as the short term of feudal service in the field, led to the gradual substitution of paid troops for cavalry in all the armies of Europe. When to

this indiscipline we add a total ignorance of geographical knowledge, (the sole cause of the double failure of Lewis IX) defective commissariat and means of transport, ignorant contempt of strategy, and inexperience in siege operations, we wonder that the Crusaders should have prevailed at all.

The lesson to be learnt from the Crusades was that to win battles it was necessary to combine infantry and cavalry in the line of battle, and to support both by a strong force of archers, on foot or on horseback.[1] But lessons of victory and defeat alike seem to have been lost on the mediæval generals. They came back from the Holy Land for the most part as ignorant as they went. Only two, Richard I and Edward I, both men of great military ability, seem to have profited by their experience as Crusaders; and each of them showed his ability by applying his experience to new conditions.

Richard I, however, (in spite of *Ivanhoe*,) did not know the English longbow. It was this weapon, as all the world knows, which determined the superiority of the English battle in the Edwardian wars with Scotland and France. It is not certain when or how the longbow became the English weapon. The English at Hastings, as well as the Normans, are represented in the Bayeux tapestry as using the short horseman's bow, and drawing the arrow to the breast, not to the ear.[2] The bow is not mentioned in the Assize of Arms in 1181; and there is little account of English archery till the wars of Edward I in Wales and Scotland. The Crusaders employed the crossbow, a long-

[1] Oman, *Art of War*, *passim*.

[2] The Bayeux tapestry is a Norman work, and not necessarily accurate in depicting the English.

range weapon, but clumsy and slow, and did not arm their knights with the short bow used with much effect by the Moslem cavalry. A man-at-arms had enough weapons to carry without being cumbered with bow and quiver; and the man-at-arms was so complete a military instrument, and so far superior in effectiveness to all others when properly handled, that it would have seemed folly to put him to a different use.

The 6-foot longbow, carrying a cloth-yard shaft, and drawn to the ear, had a greater velocity and range than the short bow, could be discharged much more rapidly than the crossbow, and could be brought to a high standard of precision. Once adopted, there was no question of its disuse. That it was never taken up by continental nations is probably, at least in part, owing to the fact that skill in it could only be obtained by long practice, which nothing but national habit could give. Archery, which formed no part of chivalric training, was the favourite pastime of the English yeomanry, and their chief pride in war. The English archer was not a mere rank-and-file man. He was a skilled craftsman using the best weapon in the world; and had all the self-respect of the Tyrolese, Boer, or American rifleman.

Edward I, himself the flower of knighthood, was the first to make effective use of the longbow, the churl's weapon and destined to destroy the knight's monopoly. His cavalry could not break the squares of Welsh pikemen, till he placed archers between his men at arms, and dispersed the phalanx of infantry.

The Scots, like the English before the Conquest, were

weak in cavalry, and relied upon their yeomen, armed with the pike, and capable of dogged resistance and steady advance. They could not be scattered by a sudden charge like the gallant but unstable Welsh: they must be broken up before the shock was given; unbroken, no cavalry could shake them. At Falkirk (1298) Wallace had a thousand horse and a few thousand archers posted on the flanks: but his whole trust was in his four 'schiltrouns'[1] of pikemen, 'impenetrable masses of spears,' numbering perhaps thirty thousand in all. The English knights attacked both flanks of the Scots, rode down their archers, and were driven off by the infantry: for Wallace's horse, stationed in the rear of his infantry, left the field without striking a blow. The English might have charged many times without breaking up the schiltrouns, as they did a few years later at Bannockburn: but Edward I brought up his own archers, bade them concentrate their fire on certain points in the Scottish squares, and sent his cavalry in at the gaps thus made.

At Bannockburn, the Scots infantry, with the advantage of position, a narrow front and defended flanks, routed three times their number of horse, foot, and archers, because the English commanders had so arranged them that the archers, numbering some thirty thousand,[2] hardly came into action, and the cavalry failed to break the squares. Edward II should have known that the Scots could not be ridden down; and that to crowd fifty or sixty thousand men

[1] The word is variously spelt 'schiltron,' 'schiltrom,' and 'schiltroun.'

[2] Mediæval (and modern) computations of numbers are not wholly to be trusted.

into a front little more than a mile long was to make the enemy a present of his advantage in numbers.

Want of space compels me to pass rapidly over the French wars of Edward III and his successors. The new conditions to be met were, for the English, how to encounter a military force more numerous than their own, and specially strong in heavy cavalry; for the French, how to neutralise the superiority of the English archers over their own arbalestry. The English leader studied his problem and solved it. The French despised their enemy, and were punished for doing so.

Everyone knows that at Crécy, as afterwards at Poictiers, the English ought to have been beaten, and that on both occasions the English longbow won the day. Edward III was 'a bad strategist but a good tactician.' He ought not to have been at Crécy on the 28th of August, 1346: but being there, he did the best that could be done. More than half his army were archers. He dismounted his men-at-arms, and posted his archers as advancing wings on each side of both the 'battles' of infantry.

'From the day of Crécy,' (writes J. R. Green) 'feudalism tottered slowly but surely to its grave . . . The churl had struck down the noble.' But it is interesting to note how little Froissart knows of this. To him, as the princes and lords, and to Francis I a hundred and fifty years later, chivalry and heraldry were more than the art of war, and he writes as if the French defeat were an unfortunate accident, not a matter of cause and effect; not perceiving that the destinies of war had passed away from the knight in armour to the archer and the pike-man, the mere pawns (as it

seemed to him) of the noble game, 'la piétaille,' 'la valetaille.' Crécy and Poictiers were lost in great measure by the pride of the French nobles, who could see no further than to the end of their own lances; and were won by commanders who studied military efficiency more than knightly etiquette.

With the end of the French wars of Edward III we come upon an unexpected obstacle in the way of the English conquests. Just as the French were improving body-armour so as to be able to repel the English arrows, the supply of English archery began to run short. Such a supply could only be found in perfection in a national levy; and the place of the levy was beginning to be taken by mercenary troops, either 'free companies,'[1] or troops furnished by 'indenture,' *i.e.*, contract: a form of military taxation more convenient to the king and less burdensome to the subject than the personal levy.

The battles of the Wars of the Roses were fought by infantry; some of whom were raised by royal commission or parliamentary vote, some hired, some came as retainers of the great lords; and 'villainous saltpetre' at last put an end to the superiority of the knightly *mêlée*, and with it to the superiority of the 'gentle' class.

The short and uncertain service of feudal barons suited neither the immediate convenience of a king of France or England, nor the establishment of his power. The great wars of the fourteenth century created a class of soldiers ready to sell their services to any cause. But before this, sovereigns in all countries had been aware of the convenience and advantage of mercenaries. Henry II struck a blow at

[1] They are also termed *routiers*, *Brabançons*, *tard-venus*.

feudalism by accepting scutage in lieu of service. Philip the Fair had a considerable standing army in his pay. Whilst declaring the universal obligation of military service, he accepted money and substitutes in lieu of personal attendance. The king's *ost*, furnished in part by feudal vassals subject to the *ban*, was also made up by paid bodies of infantry, crossbowmen and men-at-arms, or *gendarmes*, the latter denoting, not the chivalry of France, but light and heavy cavalry armed in the same manner as the knights, and serving for fixed pay.[1] Charles VII had a force of 1500 *gendarmes*, each of whom served with six horses. Lewis XI employed mercenaries from all countries, and from his time the place of the seignorial levies is taken by a royal army. *Compagnies d'ordonnance*, Free Companies. *Landsknechts*, are so many names for armies to be bought in the market. The contractor, commonly known in Italy by the name of *condottiere*, made war his trade and managed it on business principles. His men were well clothed, armed, and fed, and received regular pay. They were trained in all the latest developments of war, and could meet the old-fashioned chivalry on their own ground and bewilder them with new inventions in archery, artillery, and infantry. No warlike sovereign could dispense with the Free Companies. They took the place held by the Templars and Hospitallers in the Holy Wars, and like them were preferred to the feudal levies as being better troops and more obedient to orders. But what a downfall in sentiment! At the siege of Padua (1509) Bayard refused to let the gentlemen of

[1] Each *gendarme* was attended by two archers and two horsemen. This complement of five men (later seven) was known as a 'lance' or a 'man-at-arms,' and this nomenclature was applied to the chivalry also.

France fight side by side with Landsknechts, who had no distinction of birth, no rule of honour, no patriotism, no principle except to fulfil the terms of a bargain, no idea of pleasure except the excitement of a fight and the license of free quarters, or the sack of a town.

Hallam instances[1] one of these mercenaries who marched about Italy without a master to pay him or a cause to defend, levying black-mail wherever he went. Werner, a German Landsknecht, had engraved on his cuirass 'Enemy of God, pity and mercy.'[2] The 'Great Company' of 1353 consisted of 20,000 men, horse and foot, whose only business was to plunder; and the city of Florence, which refused to submit to their exactions, could only meet them with hired troops like themselves. Sir John Hawkwood (d. 1393) whose monument adorns the Cathedral of Florence, was one of the most eminent as well as the most respectable of these so'diers of fortune, whose dreary track of bloodshed and devastation seared the face of Europe, till they came to their worst notoriety under Mansfeld, Wallenstein, and Tilly in the Thirty Years' War. The actual profession of *condottiere* was too unnatural to be permanent; but the ill example of buying trained soldiers, instead of bearing arms, fell in with the convenience of princes and subjects, systematised, and at the same time dishonoured war, and put an end to chivalry as a factor in military affairs. In chivalry, any knight might serve under what captain he chose and do what deeds he chose—now he must take his chance, as we should say, with his regiment, and 'not run risks'—a *bourgeois* conception of war.

[1] Sismondi v. 380. [2] Mills, II., 328.

One of the many points of difference between the feudal chivalry of England and that of other countries is illustrated by the comparatively small number of castles. The knight of the Middle Ages spent a good part of his time in fighting the battles of his lord, whether in the larger operations of war, or in the petty disputes between castle and castle. The more perfectly the feudal system was developed, or (in other words) the greater the number of independent or nearly independent princes, the more licence was there of private war. Thus there was more private war in Germany than in France, in France than in Italy. As a general rule, castles were more abundant in mountainous districts than in the plain The reason is twofold. It was more easy, in the first place, to set up impregnable fastnesses in the hills than in the plain, where they could be surrounded and starved out—the only method, except treachery, of taking a castle with walls twenty feet thick and towers fifty feet high; a fact always to be borne in mind in mediæval warfare—and in the second place, civic life is opposed to war: the interests of a town are peaceful in the main, and the feuds of Montagues and Capulets, Orsinis and Colonnas, so common in Italian cities, belong to a date when the civic spirit had decayed, and given place to the spirit of family pride and chivalry, which is incompatible with it.

In England, before the Conquest, the habits of the nation were opposed to war. Both Danes and Normans found the English an easy conquest, because they wanted, not courage and arms, but organisation. The English had no disciplined militia or armed nobility. They built few castles, and such as they had were of timber; and when the

Norman kings built castles of stone, they kept the custody of them in their own hands. Stephen and John, the first from weakness, the second because he was the enemy of his subjects, lost the control of the royal castles, and permitted the erection of others: and the spirit of chivalry broke out at once in private war. The beginning of Henry III's reign was occupied by the reduction of castles into the hands of Hubert de Burgh, the king's minister. When Henry's misrule made the Baronage his enemies, the Barons' War was a struggle for the possession of castles: and it was so understood by both parties. The King's party, having once regained the castles, was able to rule temperately, and without resistance. The strong government of Edward I put an end for ever to private war and knight-errantry. Scutage, invented by Henry I and organised by Henry II, *i.e.*, the substitution of money payment for feudal service in person, and the later engaging of a mercenary army by 'indenture' or agreement with a feudal lord for the services of his dependants, worked the same way, and tended both to increase the royal power, and to keep the English a peaceful nation. The home force, the native militia or *fyrd*, was principally employed in border warfare, and the armies which fought in France and in the Holy Land were chiefly composed of paid soldiers, though they contained also bodies of feudal cavalry, supplied by the chivalry of England.

It follows from this that the lords and knights of England had not that constant practice in war which made the feudal cavalry of Europe so formidable; and as practice in war was that which gave its reality to chivalry, the perfection, or

extravagance, of chivalry is to be found in France rather than in this country.

CHAPTER V

Tournaments

Noble cavalry and plebeian infantry—Tournaments a military training—In later times a mere pageant—Combats of champions—Personal challenges—Taillefer—The Cid, etc.—Robert Bruce at Bannockburn—Robert de Beaumanoir– Origin of tournaments—First used in France—Abuse of tournaments—Ordinances against them—Tournaments in the 15th and 16th centuries : Charles the Bold, René of Anjou, Henry VIII—Merry-making at tournaments—The church opposed to them—Rules of the tournament—Combats *à outrance* and *à plaisance*—Private quarrels settled in the lists—The Duell—Four kinds of contests (1) wager of battle (2) defence of causes by champions (3) chivalrous contests (4) private quarrels—Instances of challenges—High Court of Chivalry—Arrangements at tournaments—The lists—The challenges—The prizes—Presence of ladies—Favours, badges, devices, &c—Heraldry—Arms and armour—Jousting—Breaking of lances—Sword-play.

The conception of war as a contest of heavy cavalry clad in armour was based not only upon personal prowess, but on the prowess of gentlemen of coat-armour, trained in the daily practice for the lists, and owning no comradeship with the churl who fought on foot, or the yeoman who stung the enemy's chivalry with his long-barbed shafts.[1] This conception was fostered by the growth of the habit of holding tournaments. As these increased in frequency and magnificence, so did they become less in touch with the practical conduct and theoretical development of war. The tournament, which had been a training for soldiers, became a court pageant; the knights believed themselves to have the secret of warfare all the time that their place was being taken by

[1] Froissart—'*ces saiettes barbues.*'

infantry, archery, and gunnery, and even by paid men-at-arms. They did not perceive that the world would not now be witched with noble horsemanship: and the maintenance of tournaments, after the decline of chivalry as an engine of war, heightened the contrast between the noble rider and the 'plebeian soldier' who was taking his place.

To the parade of tournament, rather than to the art of war, belong those combats of champions, whether told of monstrous Philistines, of gigantic Etruscans and Gauls, or of Moorish and Saracen Campeadors, which fill the pages of ancient and mediæval chronicles and romances.

If the general himself engaged in such an adventurous business, the battle might be lost: and as a general rule the general would give his soldiers the example of courage, not of foolhardiness. The feats of the Cid and Richard I were exceptional even among knights errant; and the individual captains, like Marlborough, Condé and Napoleon, must have known when the risk was worth running, and when they must control their natural eagerness.

Among these may be reckoned the contests of champions in lieu of general battle, which are found in all early narratives of war. In the Persian legend the twelve Rokhs or heroes (like Charlemagne's '*dosipeers*') of whom Rustum was the Roland, meet twelve Turkish champions and decide the war, which from them was called 'the war of the twelve Rokhs'.[1] Edmund Ironside proposed to Cnut to decide the kingdom by eight champions: William of Normandy challenged Harold, and accepted a challenge from Geoffrey of Anjou; John sent a cartel to Lewis VII

[1] d'Herbelot.

of France; Edward III, to Philip of Valois; Richard II, to Charles VI; Francis I, to Charles V: that such challenges were not often accepted throws no discredit upon the good faith of those who sent them; though, as was natural, they commonly came from the party who had least to lose. These challenges were partly the natural expression of the military spirit delighting in personal distinction, partly of the nature of an ordeal, on the principle that God would defend the right. But when the stakes were not so vast, personal challenges are often met with. We read in the histories how Taillefer the *jougleur* rode at Hastings before the Norman host, half Berserker, half troubadour, throwing his lance into the air and catching it as it fell, and singing the song of Roland, careless of the certain death to which he was riding. At the siege of Jerusalem, 1097, one of Duke Robert's men attacked the city wall alone and was killed, no one following him. The Cid, the Challenger, *el Campeador*, calls out gigantic Moors to battle and vanquishes them. Peter the Hermit summons the Saracen lord of Antioch to send him forth three Paynim knights to fight against three Christian knights, and gets for answer from the sober-minded heathen that he will do no such thing, and cares neither for Peter nor for Christ. Another knight (at Cherbourg 1379) invited three champions, 'the most amorous knights' of the enemy, to fight with three amorous knights on his part, for the love of their ladies, much as Beaumains or Gareth in the *Morte d'Arthur* kills or spares knight after knight, red, green, and black, to please Linet. At the battle of Cocherel (1364) an English knight left the ranks 'pour demander à faire un coup de lance contre celui des

François qui seroit assez brave pour entrer en lice avec luy.' Rowland du Boy presented himself 'pour luy prêter le colet,' and had the best of it. At Bannockburn De Bohun 'burned before his monarch's eye to do some deed of chivalry,' and pricked forth alone against Robert Bruce as he rode along the Scottish lines. Bruce, one might think, need not have risked his kingdom in a passage of arms with a crazy Englishman. The Duke of Wellington would not have done so. But the Bruce was of his own time, not of ours, and rejoiced in meeting such odds, mounted as he was on 'a sorry jennet.'

> The partridge may the falcon mock,
> If yon slight palfrey stand the shock.

Bruce was a better man-at-arms than De Bohun, and 'gave his battleaxe the swing' with such result as those know who have read Scott's chivalrous poem.[1]

The lord of the Castle of Josselin in Brittany, (27 Mar. 1351)[2] Messire Robert de Beaumanoir, 'vaillant chevalier durement et du plus grand lignage de Bretagne' (note the heraldic pride of the chronicler) called upon the captain of the town and Castle of Ploermel to send him forth one champion, two, or three, to joust with swords against other three for the love of their ladies. 'No,' said Brandebourg their captain, 'our ladies will not that we adventure ourselves for the passing chance of a single joust. But if you will, choose you out 20 or 30 of your companions and let them fight in a fair field.' So the sixty champions heard Mass, put on their harness, and went forth to the place of arms, twenty-five of each on foot and five on horseback. Then

[1] *Lord of the Isles*, Canto v. [2] Froissart.

they fought, and many were killed on this side and the other, and at the last the English had the worst of it, and all who were not slain were made prisoners, and courteously ransomed when they were healed of their wounds. Froissart saw, sitting at King Charles's table, one of the champions, a Breton knight called Yvain Charuelz; and 'his visage was so cut and slashed that he showed well how hard the fighting had been.' The Barons at Kenilworth in the 'War of the Disinherited' (1266) disdained to wait behind their defences, and kept the castle gates open in defiance of Prince Edward for ten months, thinking chivalry more glorious than warfare—from the morrow of St. John Baptist to the morrow of St. Thomas 1266.[1]

We may not deride this childish pride and useless bravery. We do not laugh at the piper who goes on playing the pipes when he is sickening with the pain of the bullet in his ankle, nor at the two drummer-boys of the *Fore and Aft*. Such incidents glorify war. We feel that the game of war, thus played, is a noble sport which increases the dignity of humanity; but at the same time it puts warfare on an unreal footing, gives it an artificial value, and does not correspond to the only justification of war, *Pax quaeritur bello:* it rather exalts war as the noblest of pastimes, and a thing to be admired and encouraged for its own sake; and this was the principle on which chivalry rested.

The imitation of war as an amusement in peace must be as old as war itself. War dances are common among all savage tribes. Horsemanship in arms was practised as an

[1] (*Chron: Petriburg.*)

amusement in peace by Persians, Arabs, Moors and Indians The Greeks had their pyrrhic dance and races in armour, the Romans their Salian dance and *Ludus Troiae*, from which some derived the word *Torneamentum*. Vercingetorix, the hero of Cæsar's Gaulish war, was famed as a horseman—a knight-errant, Mommsen calls him—and his picturesque surrender, riding up to the Roman lines in full armour and laying down his arms at the general's feet, is in the true chivalrous manner. The Goths of the 6th century held games of mimic warfare.[1] The earliest historical instance recorded (by Nithard, a contemporary)[2] is at a meeting at Strassburg between Charles the Bald and Lewis the German, sons of Lewis the Pious, on the occasion of their dividing between them the kingdom of their brother Lothar in 875, at which the vassals of both kings engaged in contests on horseback. Henry the Fowler (876-936) is said to have brought the tourney from France into Germany, or to have invented it in his own country, and from his date till the end of the 15th century we have a complete succession, too complete to be historical, of grand tournaments held by imperial command. Geoffrey of Preuilli, (1056) a Breton lord, is also credited with the invention; 'torneamenta invenit': *i.e.*, (we may surmise) drew up the rules of the game

It appears probable that tournaments were first in regular use in France, and Matthew Paris calls them *conflictus Gallici*.[3] We hear of them in England as early as the

[1] Selden, *the Duello.*

[2] His mother was Bertha, daughter of Charles the Great. [3] Ducange

reign of Stephen, who is accused of 'softness' (*mollities*) because he could not or would not hinder them. Henry II forbade them, and the knights who wanted to joust had to go overseas. Geoffrey, Count of Brittany, left the English court, and rejoiced in the opportunity of 'matching himself with good knights' on the border of Normandy and France. Richard I is said by Matthew Paris to have introduced tournaments into England, in order 'that the French might not scoff at the English knights as being unskilled and awkward' ('tamquam rudibus et minime gnaris'). Richard also got money for the Crusade by granting licences to hold tournaments in certain lawful places, and fined Robert Mortimer 'quod torniaverat sine licentia.' This shows that the fashion had already taken root in England.

The tournament, which may have been invented or regulated in the ninth or tenth century, was in full operation in the twelfth, in every part of Europe, in spite of the opposition of the Church; and was the favoured pastime of nobles and gentlemen throughout the Edwardian period,[1] and until beginning of the sixteenth century, when it suffered a the brilliant eclipse in the blaze of knightly and royal display which preceded the age of the Reformation and closed the feudal era. Sovereigns, however, were jealous of anything which might exalt their vassals, and issued many ordinances against unlicensed tournaments, as infringing the royal prerogative, unsettling the counties, and making the castles

[1] John of Brabant, who travelled in England 1292-3, was present at tournaments held in seven places in the course of three or four months; and in the time of Edward III., we hear of seven tournaments of great magnificence being held in one year in England.

of great lords a school of private war.[1] The Plantagenet kings, though fond of knightly display, had a clear notion of the serious character of war; and a practical soldier like Henry V. looked upon tournaments as an interruption to business, and declined to hold jousts at his wedding with Catherine of France; 'rather,' he said, 'let the king of France and his servants besiege the town of Sens, and there "jouster et tournoyer et montrer sa prouesse et son hardement;"'[2] he would not mix up war with its counterfeit.

The degradation of tournaments from a knightly contest to a senseless pageant may be seen in its full absurdity in the accounts of tournaments held by Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, René of Anjou the fantastic King of 'Cyprus and Jerusalem,' the Duke of Bourbon and others, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The heralds had it all their own way, and the appointments and decorations of the lists resemble those of a circus rather than of a noble contest. The announcement of 'joustes mortelles et à champs' issued by John Duke of Bourbon in 1414 may be given here . . . 'desirans d'eschiver oisiveté et explecter (exploiter) nostre personne . . . pensant y acquérir bonne renommée et la grace de la très-belle de qui nous sommes

[1] These prohibitions of tournaments constantly occur in English history, and are to some extent an indication of the condition of the country. Edward II (see Rymer's *Fœdera*) issued a great number of letters forbidding all persons *torneare, burdeire, justas facere, aventuras quaerere, seu alias ad arma ire. . . . sine licentia nostra speciali.* The reason given is for fear of breach of the peace and terrifying quiet people. No tournament, *e.g.* is to be held within six miles of Cambridge, to protect '*tranquillitatem ibidem studentium.*' Such meetings were an excuse for disaffected persons to meet and consult to the King's damage, and might be, and no doubt were, misused for purposes of family feuds and private warfare. So, too, in France, Philip IV. (1312) forbade all '*astiludere vel justare, sub poena amissionis armorum.*'

[2] Favyn, *Théâtre d'honneur.*

serviteurs'—the duke proclaims a tournament to be held every Sunday during the space of two years; sixteen lords, knights aud squires (whose names are given) will meet all comers in equal number on foot in *joustes à outrance*, each champion wearing a fetter on his right leg, hung by a chain of gold for the knights, of silver for the squires.

These conceits became more and more extravagant, and came to a height in the reigns of Henry VIII and Elizabeth. The knights dress up in extravagant disguises and assume ridiculous titles, 'Cure Loiall,' 'Bon Voloire,' 'Valiant Desire,' and so forth. Some hold a pass called 'la gueule du Dragon,' which no lady is allowed to cross unless she can find a knight who will break two lances for her. King René built a castle of wood called 'la Joyeuse Garde' and held feasts there for forty days, with entertainments of pageants in which dwarfs dressed as Turks took part, and tame lions with chains of gold were exhibited. Few were hurt in these later tournaments. Poets recited verses, ladies decked themselves with fine clothes and jewels; the knights seem to have thought more of displaying their arms than of using them, and machines—towers, fountains, scaffoldings, etc.—play a larger part in the show than knightly valour. These absurdities reached if possible, a higher climax of absurdity, in tournaments held before Queen Elizabeth at Greenwich. It is Holofernes on horseback. To all appearance chivalry was at its most brilliant perfection at the Field of the Cloth of Gold, in 1520. Lances were broken by sovereigns and nobles, banquets were given, all the pomp of heraldry glorified the scene. But the pageant was meant to exalt the three monarchs; the knightly deeds

were only an accessory to policy. It was a bravery of processions, pavilions, caparisons, armour, and quaint devices, not a contest of chivalry: and it was the last show of the kind on so grand a scale; for though tournaments continued to be held as pageants till the seventeenth century, more than fifty years after Henry II of France was killed (1551) in tilting with the Count of Montgomeri, they had ceased to bear a real relation to modern war, with matchlocks, cannon, and great numbers of infantry.

In England, as well as on the Continent, the tournament and the exercises which prepared for it were the serious occupation of the gentry, when they were not employed in farming, hunting and hawking; and were as engrossing a pleasure as the turf in later times. How eager the nobles were to engage in this amusement may be judged from the fact that after the signing of Magna Carta, when King John had disappeared from sight, and was known to be collecting an army and preparing to make war upon his subjects, the barons could find no better way of passing the time than in holding a tournament at Staines, the prize of which was a bear, given by a lady to be jousted for.

All the merriment of mediæval life came together at the fair which accompanied a tournament. Jougleurs,[1] strolling players and musicians were welcome. John de Rampaygne, in the time of John, disguised himself as a *jogeleur* and went to a tournament in France and beat a tabor at the entrance of the lists. These merrymakings brought idle people together, and were the occasion of drunkenness, gambling and

[1] *Jougleur* = *ioculatar*—not *iongleur*, as it is commonly written.

other evils, and were probably one of the clerical objections to tournaments.

When the fashion of tournaments was established, the Church set itself in vain to prohibit them. Eugenius III, Innocent III, Innocent IV, published bulls against them. Alexander III, at the Lateran Council of 1179, forbade the holding of 'detestabiles . . . illas nundinas vel ferias quas vulgo torneamenta vocant,' and refused Christian burial to such as fell in them; visions of knightly souls excluded from Paradise confirmed these prohibitions; and as late as the 14th century Clement V renewed the prohibition from Avignon. Yet in 1350—so strong was fashion—King John held a tournament at Ville Neuve, near Avignon, at which all the Papal court was present ('tota curia papali adstante.') In the same way the Church has always refused to authorise duelling, and fashion has prevailed against the Church: the law of honour takes precedence of the Christian rule.

A tournament was the occasion not only for display of knightly prowess, but also of winning the favour of ladies, and for settling private quarrels.

Tournaments and jousts were carried on, according to strict rule, with *armes blanches*, *i.e.*, blunted spears and wooden swords. But the license, granted or assumed, of duelling, and the analogy of the wager of battle turned the sham fight into earnest; and once admitted, combats *à outrance*,[1] in which the lances were sharp and the swords of steel, became a common incident of tournaments. Many instances are recorded of noblemen killed in the

[1] *Outrance* (utterance) is extremity or completion of the contest by the death, flight, or confession of one of the parties. The opposite to *à outrance* was *à plaisance*.

lists: Geoffrey de Mandeville, Earl of Essex, killed (1216) at London in a tournament *more Francorum*—the phrase shows that they were still looked upon as an innovation on English customs—and Gilbert, Earl of Pembroke (1241) were among the number of Englishmen of note. This was no doubt one of the reasons for the frequent prohibitions which were issued. It is the interest of princes to discourage all forms of private justice, and to prevent irregular meetings in arms. As the fountain of honour and justice, the king claims the decision of quarrels, and cannot allow his lieges to kill each other except in wager of battle or in vindication of personal honour, in presence of his judges or himself.

A clear distinction exists (though it was not always drawn in the days of chivalry) between a generous contest for the love of ladies or for prowess in arms and military distinction, and the wreaking of a personal grudge under the forms of chivalry. The right of personal revenge is assumed in all primitive societies: the point of honour is an addition unknown to the Greeks and Romans, and to be attributed to the individuality of barbarism and the personal savage dignity in Celts and Teutons; and the limitation of it into the hands of justice is a measure of social progress. This limitation was begun by the Church, which prohibited all such contests exept those which partook of the nature of an ordeal; it was continued by the civil power, which classified and regulated the wager of battle by the forms and ceremonies of law, leaving the conquered party to be hanged or burnt without Christian burial, and the victor to the ban of the Church; and the courts of chivalry, though

they exalted the duty of personal resentment and inflamed the sensitiveness of honour, also raised and maintained at a higher level a sense of responsibility and self-respect in a region of sentiment which was little removed from the primary instincts of savage humanity. Sir Walter Scott is probably right in attributing to the decline and decay of chivalry the license of duelling, and even assassination, which prevailed in the 16th and 17th centuries. The *tueur* or professional duellist had not yet appeared: but some of the mediæval quarrellers must have approached the character. For instance, an English squire, John Astley, who had killed his man in France, came over to England and there killed another in the presence of Henry VI, who knighted him and gave him a hundred marks.

The modern practice of duelling is derived from the mediæval custom: or rather the fashion of cutting one another's throats for a hasty word or an ill-considered gesture which prevailed among gentlemen till the middle of this century, and still prevails among French journalists and German officers, was derived from the mediæval superstition, a superstition from which the Greeks and Romans, who fought no duels, were exempt, that a gentleman's honour demanded the sacrifice of his life at the pleasure of any person of equal rank who chose to insult him. But the mediæval practice, however opposed to reason and religion, imposed checks upon quarrelling. Personal combats in the lists were at any rate carried out in a ceremonious and dignified manner; which can hardly be said of an encounter between two gentlemen stripped to their shirts, fencing or firing with swords or pistols, in some

suburban field where the constables are not likely to come.

Personal combats in the Middle Ages were of four kinds; (1) the judicial wager of battle, a solemn appeal to God to defend the right; (2) defence of causes by means of champions such as those mentioned above; (3) contests in the lists 'for exploration of valour and observation of martial virtue,'[1] or on questions of personal honour, conducted according to the laws of the tournament, in the presence of the prince, by authority of his High Court of Chivalry;[2] and (4) private quarrels on a question of honour, which, though in agreement with the sentiment and practice of chivalry, were not restrained by the laws of a court of chivalry, and were but a 'wild justice,' subject to individual caprice.

The first of these, being part of the ancient custom of ordeal (*urthiel*, *oordeel*, *ordelium*) or appeal to divine justice by fire, water or *corsned*[3] does not concern us here. We may however remark that the wager of battle was no part of the ancient English law, but was introduced by William the Conqueror as part of the Norman custom. It was imported into English law (1) on appeals of felony, (2) upon issue joined in a writ of right 'as the last and most solemn decision of real property' in the presence of the Judges of the Common Pleas, and (3) in courts of chivalry.

The duel upon occasion of the lie given, or supposition of dishonour, was justified by the laws of chivalry; since (as Selden says) truth, honour, freedom and courtesy were

[1] Selden, *The Duello*, p. 19, *sqq.*

[2] Scott, *Essay on Chivalry*, p. 122. (Prose works Vol VI., 1839).

[3] *Corsned.* '*Panis consecratus*, (*vel potius exorcizatus*) *ex hordeo confectus; offa judicialis.*' (Spelman *gloss.*, *s.v.*)

incidents to perfect chivalry, and 'upon the lie given, custom hath arisen to seek revenge of their wrongs upon the body of their accuser . . . *seul à seul* without judicial lists.'[1]

So long as it was lawful, or at least customary, for knights to fight in the lists *à outrance*, it was impossible to ensure that private quarrels would not be settled there. But these combats were not considered the most honourable part of the tournament; and Popes and kings made many attempts to abolish them. Lewis IX, whose superiority in loftiness of character and clearness of vision lifts him far above his contemporaries, attempted to do away with judicial combats, but only succeeded *in suis terris*. Edward I forbade Sir James de Cromwell to take up a challenge from Sir Nicholas de Seagrave; whereupon the challenger 'dared him into France.' Upon a clear quarrel, the laws of chivalry ordained, and the king could not well forbid, that the forms of a judicial combat should be observed, the court being that of chivalry, as in the wager of battle it was (in England) the court of King's Bench. The court of chivalry, held under the High Constable and the Earl Marshal, with an appeal to the king, had cognisance of all military matters, and included in its purview controversies of coat-armour and precedence, as in the cases of Grey de Ruthven and Hastings (*t. r.* Hen. III), Scrope and Grosvenor (*t. r.* Rich. II) and of personal honour impeached. The court of chivalry was concerned with none but noblemen and gentlemen; it had no jurisdiction wherever the common law can give redress; it could not

[1] Selden, *The Duello.*

CHALLENGE: MOWBRAY TAKES UP BOLINGBROKE'S GAGE.—Harl. 4380, *f.* 141
(Shakespeare, *K. Rich. II.*, *Act* 1, *Sc.* 1.)

impose or grant pecuniary satisfaction or damages, nor commit to prison. Its sanction therefore was sentimental; but the chivalric sentiment was strong enough to give it authority; and at a time when, as during the Wars of the Roses, military force prevailed over civil authority, the court of the Constable and Marshal was a convenient engine in the hand of an unscrupulous king; as we see from the use made of it by Edward IV and Richard III.

On the evening before the tournament, 'esssays-of-arms' were held, in which squires and young knights fought with blunt weapons *(armes courtoises)*; and those who acquitted themselves best *(les mieux faisans)* were allowed to take part in the *grand tournoy* on the next day, and increased their claims to be admitted to the full honour of knighthood.

The lists, an oval enclosure, were pitched with rows of seats and covered galleries all round. At the middle of the longer side was the gallery or tower[1] of the ladies, and in the middle of this was placed a seat of honour for the Queen of the tournament. The pavilions of the challengers were pitched at either end, each with his shield-of-arms hung at the tent door. Across the centre was a barrier draped with cloth or silk. The ground was kept by squires, who had their own trials-in-arms the day before (*les vespres du tournoy*);[2] and all the arrangements were ordered by kings-at-arms and heralds, who acted also as judges *(diseurs)* in case of any breach of rules. The knights were armed by ladies, and received love-tokens from them, to be worn in their honour. The Queen of Beauty and Love gave the

[1] Ste. Palaye, ii. n. 67. [2] Perceforest.

'gree' or meed of valour, which might be a chaplet of flowers or leaves, a coronet, a jewel, or arms[1] besides such trophies as the helmet of the conquered knight, his arms and horses, or any badge worn by him. In the romance of Sir Tryamour the maiden Eleyn says:—

> Lordyngs, where ys hee
> That yysturday wan the gree?
> I chese hym to my fere.

Melette, the patroness and prize of the tournament held at Peveril Castle in the Peak, in the reign of Henry II, gave Garin her glove as a token. He went into the lists dressed and armed all in red, and won the prize against all comers. The ladies sometimes chose a Knight or Squire of Honour and gave him a *couvrechef de plaisir* as a 'livery' to wear *(livrées de rubans et de galands de soye.)* In the story of Perceforest the ladies gave away their veils and other headgear as favours[2] to be worn by the combatants, ('guimples et chaperons, manteaux et camises, manches et habits) till at last they all sat with their heads bare (*le chef pur*) and laughed at each other's dishevelled condition.[3]

The rules and ceremonies of tournaments were arranged by heralds according to the strictest ritual, and differed little if at all in different countries. The challengers rode forward to the barriers, and touched the shields of the knights with whom they wished to joust. The challenger *à outrance* struck his opponent's shield with the sharp end of his spear. Some knights offered themselves to meet 'all

[1] au mieux frappant une espée de tournoy, et au mieux deffendant un heaume. Ducange, *sur Joinville, Dissert.* VII.

[2] *faveur*, joyau, noblesse, enseigne. Littré.

[3] Ste. Palaye.

comers';— others reserved themselves to particular opponents, and might, without reflection on their valour, decline to meet any individual adversary.

Besides their armorial bearings, the combatants used many devices in honour of their ladies (sometimes riddles known to their ladies alone) or for disguise. A knight might choose to fight unknown, as Sir Lancelot in the *Idylls of the King*. In such a case he might wear 'a red sleeve broidered with pearls,' or some other favour; or his shield might bear some quaint device, such as the well-known instance of the falcon with the legend :—

> I bear a falcon fairest in flight—
> Who stoops at me, to death is dight.[1]

or he might appear in arms all of one colour, like the red and green knights in the *Morte d' Arthur*, or the Black Knight in *Ivanhoe*. So we hear of the Knight of the Leopard, the Knight of the Swan, and the like. At a certain tournament a knight appeared with chains attached to his hands and feet, to shew that he was chained to his word of honour (*enchaîné à sa parole*[2]). Another was led in by a lady, who held the end of his chain. Heraldry comes in here with its multitude of badges, assumed as personal, distinctions for the moment, not like armorial bearings, worn for the honour of the house.

The arms and armour were those used in battle. Besides swords and lances, clubs of crabtree were sometimes used, at least in Germany, and occasionally battle-axes also.

[1] see *Marmion*, note 8.

[2] The Green Knight, who did wonderful feats of arms at Ascalon and Acre in the third Crusade, wore chains upon his helmet. Green was the especial colour of knights errant.

The only difference was in the helmet, which was of a conical or cylindrical shape, adorned with plume or crest (*cimier*), covering the whole head and neck, and resting on the shoulders. The tilting helmet was carried by a squire, when not in use; it may often be seen in monuments, serving as a pillow for the knight's head.

When the lists were cleared, the jousting began. The squires or pursuivants saw to their master's arms and horses, and stood in readiness to render help in every way short of joining in the contest, which was only allowed in the *mêlée*;[1] arms and horses, the knights mounted and set their spears in the 'rest' (a half ring attached to the saddle-bow), and waited for the herald to give the signal for charging to the barrier which parted the lists. The object of each was to strike his opponent either on the head, the more effectual but more difficult aim, or on the body. The shock of the heavy-armed man and horse often dismounted both combatants. If both sat firm, the lances were generally shivered; but it often happened that horse and man fell together; and whether the arms were sharp or blunt, ribs or necks might be broken. If the horses did not swerve, and the lances did not break, and either knight aimed true and held his lance firm, mortal wounds were often given. If both knights were unhurt and kept their seats, they wheeled their horses about and charged again with fresh lances, till one or both were unhorsed. Then the victor also dismounted, and the combat was continued on foot with swords. Two men completely cased in mail or plate might slash at each other

[1] From the squire's help to his master is derived the custom of 'second' in a duel, and their separate encounters with the opposite seconds.

with swords for a long time without much harm done to either. The combats in the *Morte d'Arthur* and other romances last for hours, and the knights rest by consent, to drink and get the cool air, and then set to again, inflicting terrible wounds, which are, in Homeric fashion, minutely described. But they are always ready, after their wounds have been bound up by the ladies, to attend the feast in the evening. In real tournaments, except in the combats *à outrance*, it is probable that the amount of bloodshed was not great.

The tilting with lances is properly styled the joust, and was held to be of less dignity than the tourney proper, where the knights met each other with swords in the mêlée, a number of champions on each side fighting promiscuously. These encounters, we may believe, were the most dangerous, and therefore the most interesting kind of contest. Single champions might keep cool; but twenty or thirty knights meeting each other on horseback must have fought with the fury of excitement, and *armes courtoises* were not used in the *mêlée*. Such combats were often the occasion of much bloodshed. We read of forty-two knights and squires being killed at a tournament. When Edward I was on his way from the Holy Land, (1274), he spent some time in France, and was present at a grand tournament at Châlons. He was assailed by a knight, who tried to drag him from his horse. Edward was the stronger of the two; he lifted his man off the saddle, and rode away with him. His party tried to rescue their fellow, and the fight became so fierce that many were killed on both sides, and the mêlée was called 'the little battle (*parvum bellum*) of Châlons.'

The *mêlée* was a combat for life and death, closed only by the defeat of one party, or by the heralds or the king giving the word to cease. 'The king hath thrown his warder (truncheon) down'[1] was the signal to stop the battle in the lists at Coventry, when Mowbray and Bolingbroke met to settle their quarrel.

When all was over, the victorious knights either in the lists, or at the banquet afterwards, received their guerdon from the lady of the tournament; usually a garland of flowers, or more substantial prizes, a 'gerfalcon white as milk,' 'three fair steeds great and high, white as snow,' two greyhounds,[2] and (at least in the romances), the love or the hand of an Emperor's daughter. A prize of gold pieces was also given,[3] which the victor shared with his comrades or distributed among his squires. The heralds cried 'Largesse' and 'Noël;' the knights showered small coin among the crowd; there was much shouting and trampling. A feast was then held, at which the ladies as well as their champions were present, enlivened by the music of minstrels, the songs and tricks of *jougleurs* and other amusements more merry than refined.

Jousts were sometimes held separately from tournaments —'joustes à tous venans, grandes et plénières.' These were (according to Ducange) also called Round Tables, where knights engaged in single combat or in equal numbers, and dined together at a round table (the sign of equality in arms) at the charges of the lord who held the

[1]Shakespeare, *King Richard* II, Act i. [2]Romance of Guy of Warwick.

[3]So large a sum as 100,000 pieces of gold is mentioned. But this was a king's ransom, and worth a million and a half in modern money.

Table. Such was the first institution of the Order of the Garter; the Round Tower ('la Rose') at Windsor having been built for the purpose.[1]

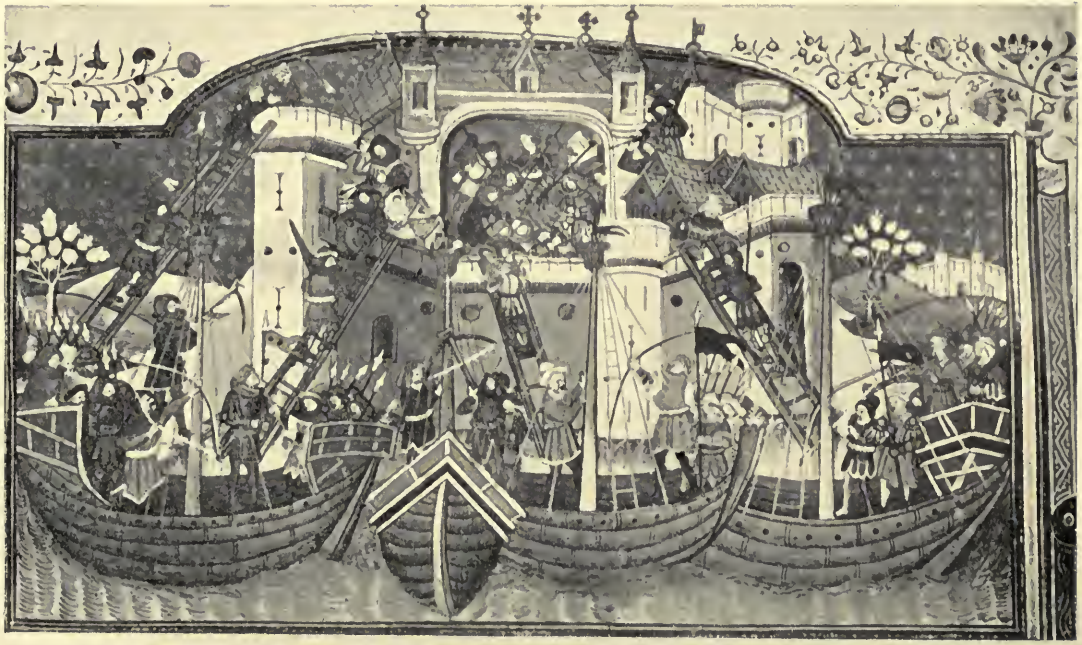
Other phrases used are *behourd*, *bourde*, a wooden castle to be assaulted and defended; *barrière*, where two troops of combatants fought with axe, sword and mace, to force a bar placed across the lists; and *pas d'armes*, where a pass (*clusa*, *clausura*) was to be held against all comers. At the jousts in which Henry II of France was killed (1559), there was a *pas d'armes*; and the royal proclamation ran, 'le pas est ouvert par Sa Majesté très-chrestienne . . . . pour estre tenu contre tous venans douëment qualifiez.' The details of every part were drawn out in enormous prolixity and triviality by heralds, whose 'silly business' was as unduly glorified then as it has been unduly disparaged since.

The tournament in *Ivanhoe* is a good description of what ordinarily took place. Scott was not an acute archæologist, and he has no authority for making a Templar engage in a tournament, a thing forbidden by the rules of the Order; and the details generally are drawn rather from Froissart and Malory than from any accounts of the time of Richard I; but with these exceptions the account is as truthful as it is brilliant.

Tournaments continued in France till Henry II was mortally wounded (1559) by Montgomery; the next year also, the Duke of Montpensier, a prince of the blood, was killed at a tournament. In England and other countries

[1] The table ran along the walls of the tower, the guests sitting on one side of it, facing inwards. In the centre were the carvers, sewers, ministrels, etc.

they went on still, increasing in costliness and unreality. Henry VIII always won the prize. The knights vied with each other, not so much in knightly skill as in splendid disguises, and the invention of extravagant costumes and devices. 'Bevis was believed' by those who saw these brilliant masquerades. But there was no seriousness in it all. The combats were not dangerous, the knights and ladies were playing a fantastic game. Nothing more extravagant was ever devised than the tournament celebrated by Henry VIII after the birth of his son Prince Arthur, whose name bears witness to the attempt to revive obsolete fashions.



ASSAULT OF A CASTLE BY SEA.—Reg. 15 E vi, *f* 217.

[*Face page 109.*

CHAPTER VI

THE CRUSADES

Chivalry and Crusades—Cause and effect—Discipline of Crusades—Various motives for crusading—Virtues and vices of early crusaders—Christendom in Arms—Origin of Crusades—Gregory VII, Urban II—Universal enthusiasm—Ignorance of the crusaders—Pride and cruelty—Instances of barbarity—Contrast between the first Crusade and the later—Instances of crusaders—Robert of Normandy—Godfrey—Tancred—William of Poitou—Bertrand de Born—Richard I—Saladin—St. Lewis—End of the Crusades—Teutonic Knights—Æneas Silvius—Fall of Constantinople—Result of Crusades—Wars of Granada.

THE history of chivalry as a living organism may almost be said to be co-extensive with the history of the Crusades. 'The Crusades' says Gibbon,[1] were 'at once an effect and a cause of this memorable institution.' Before the first Crusade, knighthood was undisciplined. The military orders had not yet set a pattern of knightly perfection; heraldry and ceremonial of all kinds were undeveloped; the literature of romance was in its infancy; gallantry was no necessary qualification of a knight; the *lingua franca* of a common profession had not yet bound all nationalities together in a common interest; and feudal obligations were not yet softened by the courtesies enjoined by chivalry. The soldiers of the first Crusade were brave,

[1] Ch. 58.

violent, cruel, enthusiastic, superstitious and devout; uncontrolled in all their passions, good and bad, and owning few of the restraints afterwards imposed as the duty of knighthood, except valour and honour. By the end of the last Crusade, chivalry had ceased to advance. Its rules were fixed, its standards of conduct settled. It had nothing to invent, no novelties to expect. The art of noble horsemanship and the manage of the sword and lance were early completed; to these, warfare with the Saracens had added the employment of light cavalry, and improved that of archery; and contact with the military science of Constantinople had taught the soldiers of the West how to marshal their infantry and cavalry in the field, and how to build, besiege, and defend castles larger and more artfully constructed than the Norman keeps, such as the Tower and Rochester Castle, which represent the first age of castle-building in Europe.[1]

The nations of Europe had never been brought face to to face with each other till the first Crusade joined them in a single enterprise. With no common language, and few common ideas to unite them,—beyond their allegiance to the Church of Rome, the only stable landmark in a distracted age—the crusaders found another tie in the primeval tradition of knighthood. The bond of a common knighthood was as real and as effective as that of a common faith. It was difficult for the rude soldiers, hot-tempered and full of earthly passions, to behave every day like Tasso's paladins. They had come to the East from a variety of causes, not all religious—enterprise, ambition, knight-errantry, commercial speculation. The trade routes of Europe pointed the way

[1]Oman, *History of the Art of War.*

and supplied facilities; and the Templars and Hospitallers made a good business of conveying crusaders. Their religious services were sincerely paid, but occupied only a small part of their energy: and knighthood with its duties and privileges took precedence of religion, and became more absorbing and interesting when it was shared in common with adventurers from all parts of the world. Here was a real and practical freemasonry. Indeed the freemasonry of knighthood explains, as much as the object of the war, such harmony as was preserved among so many fierce and proud commanders and their turbulent followers. If it is difficult for a 'European Concert' to be maintained in these times for a few months or weeks, when all the commanders are aware that discord would ruin the object for which they consented to act together, and when all action at the front is controlled or thwarted by cool-headed ministers at home, how much more difficult must combined action have been when crusading chiefs had to act for themselves, without reference to governments, and were actuated by direct impulses of emulation, personal jealousy, mutual ignorance, and fanatical enthusiasm. The crusaders would never have got further than Constantinople if their savage passions had not been kept in check by an obligation, however lightly felt, of mutual respect and deference. Chivalry, though undeveloped, had already established certain fundamentals; respect for noble birth, some sense of courtesy among equals, some obedience to leaders, honourable observance of the knightly promise, a high and keen sense of personal honour. The crusaders pillaged and burnt without distinction the possessions of Christian and infidel which

came in the way of their march. Anna Comnena tells us, for instance, that the Franks slew the whole population of a Christian town near Ancyra, which came out to meet them with priests, cross, and gospel. They murdered Jews at home and abroad as willingly as Saracens. But among themselves they learnt forbearance and discipline, and chivalry was strengthened and purified by the practice of the virtues which were congenial to it. A noble savage like Robert of Normandy showed the best side of his character under this discipline. Godfrey and Tancred, from being petty princes absorbed in petty wars, became the leaders of Christendom; and their shining example was admired and imitated by men who had but the shadow of their qualities.

The idea of a Holy War was no novelty, for Christians and Mohammedans had been fighting in Spain for two hundred years before the first Crusade. The idea of defending the Christian lands from the Eastern invaders—Constantinople as well as Rome—was dimly in men's minds before the sufferings of pilgrims and the capture of Jerusalem stirred religious ardour. But the immediate origin of the Crusades is to be traced, before the capture of Jerusalem by the Seljukian Turks in 1076, to the genius of Gregory VII. His piety conceived the liberation of the Holy Land from the infidels, and his ambition no doubt foresaw the acquisition of power which would accrue to the Church by the successful issue of a Holy War, which might lead to the reconciliation of the Eastern and Western Churches under the primacy of the Pope.

Gregory's design was carried out by Urban II, the patron

of Peter the Hermit. Neither the love of enterprise, natural to a warlike society, and heightened by the obligation of knight-errantry, nor the hope of gaining lands and riches in the East, would account for the zeal which made thousands of princes and wealthy lords mortgage their principalities and crown jewels, their lands and castles, and poor men their cattle and farming implements. A stronger motive was found in the religious fervour which sometimes seizes upon masses of simple men possessed with one idea.[1] It was like a miracle (says a chronicler) to see all classes buying dear and selling cheap.[2] It is difficult to comprehend an enthusiasm thus taking possession of half the human race. Men's minds were then more at leisure from thought, and had room for a single idea. All wars and brigandage (we are told) came to an end. 'The Crusade, like the rain, stilled the wind.' All classes, rich and poor, sewed the red cross on their habits.[3]

The religious motive was at least as strong as that of gain or adventure: and the improvidence of the Crusaders was in agreement both with the religion which bade take no thought for the morrow, and with the chivalric expectation of castles to be stormed, dragons and enchanters to be slain, princesses to be delivered, paynim kings and their kingdoms to be conquered. So ignorant and sanguine were the first

[1] Gibbon l.c. [2] Guibert p. 481.

[3] Ducange *s.v.* The crosses were all red in the first crusades: in the later crusades other colours distinguished the several nations. But the red cross was retained by the English (except in the crusade of Richard I, who wore a white cross); and the flag of our admirals is a crusading emblem. (See Gibbon, Ch. LVII. note., Vol VI. p. 404, 1855).

Crusaders that they thought each new city they reached must be Jerusalem; so superstitious that they expected miracles wherever they went, and were not disappointed. They trusted to their leaders and to the favour of God. They had neither plan of operation nor commissariat: chivalry and feudalism made them an assemblage of several adventurers rather than a combination of national forces—if indeed the word 'national' is not an anachronism when applied to an age in which the nations were those who spoke the same tongue, not those who obeyed, except in a feudal sense, the same sovereign. It is to the honour of chivalry and of the noble character of some of their chiefs that the valour of the Crusaders prevailed for a time against the forces of the infidels, and established Christian kingdoms in the East.

As a school of knightly exercise, no such parade-ground had ever been known. With all Europe looking on, the emulation of the combatants was increased a hundred-fold. At home, in some obscure northern castle, a knight might surpass Sir Lancelot in doughty deeds, and remain unknown. Here, everything was rumoured in the camp, memorized by troubadours and chroniclers, and blown by the trumpet of fametoall the courts of the West. This was no private adventure, no merely national war: it was all Christendom in arms for God.

The heroes of the first Crusade were no exception to the rule of fierceness and even ferocity with which we are familiar in the history of the Norman kings of England. Among the most conspicuous qualities of barbarians are pride, personal vanity, and violent anger. Achilles, who

struts about like an Indian chief, recounting his deeds of arms, who is so 'possessed with greatness'[1] that he postpones the interest of the whole Grecian army to the indulgence of his own resentment, is also the merciless slayer of Hector, *iracundus*, *inexorabilis*. Like him, Baldwin, the brother of Godfrey, by his pride and self-assertion provoked the courteous Tancred to 'a private and profane quarrel'[2] in presence of the enemy. Raymond Count of Toulouse was distinguished among his companions by his violent and overbearing temper no less than by his knightly honour: he tore out the eyes and cut off the limbs of prisoners; possessed, even beyond the rest of the Crusaders, by a demon of cruelty and ferocity. Not even the heroic Godfrey was free from the love of bloodshed. He put no check on his followers at the capture of Jerusalem. As he was first in valour and piety, so he was conspicuous in the massacre which flooded the Temple of Jerusalem with streams of blood. These were but the common incidents of Norman and Frank warfare: the crimes which make the name of King John infamous were lightly regarded a century earlier. To torture prisoners, to murder women and children wholesale, to blind, starve, maim and mutilate private enemies or prisoners of war, was as lawful as to slay men in open warfare. Quarter was neither asked nor given; cruelty became a duty when the enemy was an infidel, unless indeed he was an Emir and could pay a large ransom; and it was a rare instance of clemency when some of the most marketable of the defenders of Jerusalem were preserved alive and sold as slaves. In course of time chivalry became ashamed of

[1] Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, Act ii. Sc. 3. [2] Gibbon, Ch. 58.

these excesses: but clemency and mercy to defeated enemies were no part of the knightly virtues in the time of Godfrey, and were learnt, not from the doctrines of the Gospel and the influence of the clergy, but from the example of the Saracens themselves. The Spanish wars tell the same story; the Cid's personal prowess decided the fortune of battles and sieges; his pride and self-will had no respect for kings; he kept or broke faith with the Moors according to convenience; he burnt his prisoners alive in the square of Valencia.

The practice of warfare in this respect is summed up in the accounts of the capture of Antioch and Jerusalem, recorded by clerical chroniclers of the time with full approbation of the slaughter not only of soldiers, but of slaves, women, and children. Robert FitzGerald at the fort of Arech near Antioch brought back into camp a hundred heads of Turks; three hundred heads were sent down from Antioch to the port, 'a very welcome sight.'[1] Saracens' noses and ears were spitted on a lance as a trophy: a boat's load of Greek noses and thumbs was sent as a menace to the Emperor. At Ascalon thirty prisoners marched before Godfrey's triumphal procession, each bearing on a spear's point the head of a slain Saracen. Richard I carried the same horrid trophies at his saddle-bow. So too the Cid, and the Knight of the Scarf, Garci Perez, who in mere lightness of heart rode back to encounter single-handed a troop of Moors, and brought back not only his lady's scarf but seven green turbans as well.

Bohemund killed and roasted some prisoners as a jest, to

[1] Lockhart's *Spanish: Ballads*

make the enemy believe that the Christians were cannibals. Some of the Christians (it is stated in their own chronicles) ate the flesh of Turks, 'making war upon God's enemies both with teeth and hands.' Similar stories were told of Richard I, but we need not believe them.[1] These butcheries, it is true, were not confined to the first Crusade, nor indeed to the crusading times in general. At the capture of Acre in 1191, the whole garrison was held hostage by Richard I for the restitution of the piece of the True Cross which had been taken at Tiberias, and the payment of a fine. When the time granted had nearly elapsed, Richard sent to Saladin to remind him. Saladin replied, asking for more time, and saying that if his friends were hurt he would kill all his prisoners. At Richard's refusal, Saladin brought out the prisoners in sight of the Christian army and beheaded them all. Richard made no reprisals till the day fixed had come; he then slew all his captives, to the number, it is said of five thousand.[2] The bodies of Richard's victims were ripped up to find bezants and precious stones: 'aurum et argentum multum invenerunt in visceribus eorum.' These accounts are given not only by the Christian chroniclers, but by Mohammedan writers as well. Such scenes, were enacted throughout the progress of mediæval warfare in every country: it is a stain upon religion and chivalry that the usages of war were not softened by the

[1] See "The Gests of Richard Cœur de Lion," a romance of late date.

[2] The story is told with many variations: it is evident from the Mohammedan accounts that Richard's reputation for good faith did not stand high with them; and a Christian writer complains that they did not understand the Pope's power of dispensation.

clemency which Church and knighthood alike professed to honour.

The result of the first Crusade was the capture of Jerusalem and the establishment of Christian kingdoms in the East; the history of the succeeding Crusades is the loss of these conquests. Gibbon[1] contrasts the early enthusiasm 'while hope was fresh, danger untried, and enterprise congenial to the spirit of the times,' with the folly of 'six succeeding generations' of crusaders; and he remarks that 'a regular story of the crusades would exhibit a perpetual return of the same causes and effects.' But Gibbon was not likely to give its true value to the religious motive, which, however diluted by worldly considerations and stained by vice and licence, inspired the courage of crusaders to the last.

We shall not attempt to give here any sort of narrative of the crusading period, but only endeavour to point out the connection of the Crusades with the history of chivalrous ideas, and the change which came over these ideas, in the course of the period.

The most conspicuous incidents in the succeeding Crusades were the magnificent beginning and ignominious end of the second Crusade (1147-1149) to which are attached the names of St. Bernard, the Emperor Conrad and Lewis VII of France. The rise of Saladin, the fatal battle of Tiberias (1187) and the consequent capture of Jerusalem, owing to the want of good faith, statesmanship, and conduct of war among the Latin princes, unfit for the task of holding and organising conquered territory, led to the third Crusade

[1]Ch. LIX.

(1189-193) which is illustrated by the names of Frederick Barbarossa and Philip Augustus, and by the deeds of Richard I, but only succeeded in retaining for the Christians a strip of sea-coast and the cities of Acre, Tyre, and Jaffa, and in renewing the fortunes of the Frank principalities in the East. The fourth (1202-1204) is chiefly remarkable for the taking of Constantinople by the Venetians, and the establishment of the Latin Empire there. In 1221 the crusaders under John de Brienne, titular king of Jerusalem, attempted and nearly effected the conquest of Egypt, but lost all through the folly of the Pope's legate Pelayo in refusing good terms, and were compelled by an unusual rising of the Nile to surrender at discretion. In the fifth Crusade (1228) Frederick II, the free-thinking emperor, made good terms with Sultan Kameel, one of the conditions being the surrender of Jerusalem (with the exception of the Temple) to the emperor. Frederick was crowned king of Jerusalem, but under the ban of the Church; and his treaty with the Saracens was denounced as an act of apostasy. Richard Earl of Cornwall, brother of Henry III. (1240), recovered Palestine for a moment, but was overwhelmed by an invasion of barbarians from the east. The sixth and seventh (1248-1250; 1270-1272) led by the heroic St. Lewis, swallowed up two armies in Egypt; and Edward, son of Henry III, fought a bloody but useless battle at Nazareth. The Templars, Hospitallers and Teutonic knights, and the remnants of the Christians settled in the Holy Land kept up the show of resistance for a few years more; till the irresistible fury of the Mamelukes caused the fall of Acre (1291) and the slaughter of its garrison and inhabitants. This last scene was glorified by

the valour of the Templars and Hospitallers, who maintained to the last the honour of their Orders.[1]

A few instances may help to illustrate the character of the Crusades and their leaders. Robert Courthose, Duke of Normandy, is one of the paladins of the first Crusade; the brilliant, impetuous, unlettered son of William the Conqueror, without stability or perseverance, generous and forgiving, lavish in liberality, so easy and good-natured that he would not punish thieves and robbers, so loose a liver that his *nefandus luxus* was remarked in a licentious age, and yet so courteous that he refused to attack Winchester because the Queen was lying there in childbed—

> Il dist ke vilein sereit
> Ki dame en gésine assaldreit;

so improvident that he would give any sum of money for a hawk or a hound, and when he would go crusading, mortgaged his duchy of Normandy for 10,000 marks to his more prudent brother; so passionate and resentful that he made war upon his father and both his brothers, and ruined himself finally in the attempt to recover Normandy from Henry I;[2] a worthy brother-in-arms of Godfrey and Tancred, side by side with whom he scaled the walls of Jerusalem;—a splendid barbarian, whose violent impulses and enormous personal pride were only restrained by religious enthusiasm and chivalrous honour.

[1] The number of the Crusades is variously given. I have adopted the computation of Gibbon. Another, including the expeditions of John de Brienne and Richard of Cornwall as separate Crusades, brings the number up to nine.

[2] Freeman, *William Rufus*, ii. 407.

It was greatly to Robert's credit that when he was offered the crown of Jerusalem—we may presume on account of his high rank and bravery in action—he declined the offer at once, tempting though it must have been from the endless prospect of adventure which it opened. 'For' (said he) 'though I have come here for God's service, I have not let my duchy[1] go from me (*dimisi*) so completely as to be at my vow; and I desire, if it please God, to return to my own people.'

Godfrey of Bouillon is in all respects a higher character, but not more typical of the age. If Robert of Normandy represents bodily prowess and generosity, in Godfrey these qualities were tempered by practical sagacity and justice. His successor Baldwin III added to these virtues the good sense which enabled him to govern the kingdom of Jerusalem in peace, and to control his warlike vassals by the authority of his own character. In him, as much as in any chivalric figure, were combined the qualities of wisdom, justice and honour.

Among the chiefs of Crusade, no name stands so high as that of Godfrey of Bouillon. He was the first soldier of his day—that is, the first man-at-arms. He had won repute in his youth as the standard-bearer of the Emperor Henry IV, in whose service he killed with his own hand the rival emperor Rudolph of Swabia. He was the first to scale the walls of Rome in Henry's war against Gregory VIII, as afterwards he was (as a penance for that act of sacrilege) the first to enter Jerusalem. His deeds of arms in the Holy Land surpassed those of all the Frank champions, and were

[1] *Comitatum.* He is called indifferently *comes* and *dux*, though the latter was his proper title.

only outdone by those of Cœur de Lion himself a century later.

It was no doubt his prowess in battle, combined with his rank as Duke of Lorraine, that gave Godfrey his ascendency among the Christian princes. But he would not have held it if it had not been supported by other qualities. His power of ruling and his personal authority are shown by the fact that he kept the army together and prevented the princes, except in a few instances, from actually taking up arms against one another. His reputation for justice made all disputants come to him with confidence. He gave a rare instance of disinterested fairness by submitting to enter the lists in an ordeal with one of his own vassals. He was known to be indifferent to money, and had indignantly refused a bribe. When passing through Hungary he had offered to remain as hostage in the place of his brother Baldwin, who distrusted the Hungarian king Koloman. His purity of life was a rebuke to all his companions in arms, and his honour was as spotless as his chastity. A Saracen chief was reported to have said that 'if all honour should fail from the world, Duke Godfrey is sufficient alone to restore it and bring it to light.'[1] His love for justice is shown in the Assize of Jerusalem; a code of feudal law, the origin of which may fairly be attributed to the statesmanlike genius of Godfrey, though in its existing form it dates from a later period.

His religion was that of the time, ardent and superstitious, simple and sincere. The Pope's call to a Crusade fell in with his own desire to go on pilgrimage, and justified him

[1] Les faitz et gestes du preux Godefroy de Bouillon, etc.

in leaving his own dominions, for he was a sovereign prince. He was under a vow of pilgrimage, and now he could fulfil his vow and follow the banner of Christ his liege lord. His servants could find no fault in him except that he would stay too long in church after mass, so that their dinner got cold, and was too fond of reading good books. He was 'moult preudhomme et moult aymant Dieu et gens d'eglise.'

But Godfrey's humility endeared him to his contemporaries, and is still his chief praise. He was willing to give up his place as elder brother and general in chief, to become a hostage. He made no objection when the crown of Jerusalem was offered to Robert of Normandy, and we are glad to be able to believe the truth of the story which is recorded in every history, how he would not wear the crown of gold where his Master had worn the crown of thorns, taking the title not of King, but of 'Defender and Baron of the Holy Sepulchre.'[1] 'Il ne volt estre sacré et corosné roy de Jerusalem, porce que il ne vult porter corosne d'or là où le roy des roys Jésus Christ fils de Dieu porta corosne d'espines le jour de sa passion.'

It would be a miracle if Godfrey were unlike all the men of his time. And in the matter of cruelty to the conquered Turks he is no exception. Raymond of Toulouse saved the lives of some of his prisoners, and Tancred promised to spare his; but these were cut down next day, and no protest from Godfrey was heard. The chroniclers one after another

[1] His monkish chronicler says 'potius monachorum lux quam militum dux putabatur', but immediately corrects this by saying that he was 'well skilled in worldly business, such as fighting, arraying troops, and being the first to strike a blow at the enemy.'

tell the same story, and exalt the praises of Godfrey with the addition: 'Nullus ex eis vitae est reservatus;' 'Nec aetati nec sexui nec nobilitati nec cuivis conditioni miserebantur Christiani'—'neque feminis neque parvulis pepercerunt.' The Jews were burnt alive with their synagogue; many of the townspeople were tortured to make them give up their treasures, which with the houses and their occupants were made the property of the first crusader who entered them.

In this respect Godfrey was like the rest of the Crusaders. In all others he seems to have stood almost alone, superior to Baldwin, Raymond, and Tancred; whose portrait as drawn by Gibbon may be set down here. 'In the accomplished character of Tancred, we discern all the virtues of a perfect knight, the true spirit of chivalry, which inspired the generous sentiments and social offices of man, far better than the base philosophy, or the baser religion of the times.'[1] 'My soldiers,' said Tancred, 'are my glory and my riches. Let them have the spoil, and let me have for my portion care, danger, weariness, rain and hail.'

These instances—and many might be added to them—are enough to show how much the crusading movement owed to the principles of chivalry; and how much those principles were strengthened by the noble display of knighthood which the Crusades furnished, however it may have been stained by the darker characteristics of the knightly character, and the crimes which accompany fanaticism, ambition and worldly policy.

The gaiety which was a part of the chivalrous tempera-

[1] Ch. 58.

ment, akin to the lighthearted improvidence which threw away jewels, crowns and broad lands in the quest of a boundless adventure, is illustrated by the equipage of hounds and hawks which accompanied the Crusaders, the feasts and spectacles of Constantinople, accompanied by splendid gifts of gold and silver, jewels and stuffs, which Godfrey refused and Bohemund accepted.

William IX, Count or Duke of Poitou and Aquitaine (1071-1122), grandfather of Eleanor, the wife of Henry II, reputed as the first of the Troubadors and one of the chiefs in the second Crusade, is another conspicuous figure. As a soldier he had few equals: his gallantries exceeded all those of his time, and his verses were the most licentious. When he went to the Holy Land to save his soul, many noble ladies (*examina puellarum*) followed him, and it may be believed that he found consolation in their company during his exile.[1] Where knights went, ladies were likely to follow: but gallantry plays no part in the accounts handed down by contemporary writers; and it is probable that the emancipation from moral obligations which distinguished the later crusades had not yet spread to the north.

William of Poitou took the 'gay science' with him, till then little known out of Provence, and as yet unrefined by contact with the courtly Saracens. He combined, too, one of the many contradictions of chivalry—enough religious zeal to make him a crusader, a lax life, and an undisguised contempt of churchmen, their teaching and their practice.

[1] Yet he writes—

"J'abandonne donc joie et plaisirs,
Le vair, le gris et le sembelin.
Adieu brillants tournois, adieu grandeur et magnificence."

The simple religion of that day held that the act of taking the cross was enough to atone for an un-Christian life, and that the soldier of the Cross was certain to be saved. As another noble troubadour (the Chastelain de Coucy) says of the Holy Wars,

> On y conquiert[1] Paradis et honor
> et prix et los *et l'amour de s'amie.*

Count William was unfortunate as a Crusader. He lost most of his men and his gold and silver 'in Romania' (*i.e.* in the country of the Emperor on the mainland of Europe) being attacked by the Emir Soliman, and arrived at Antioch 'destitute and on foot.'[2] Tancred took pity on him, and furnished him with what he needed. But he had had enough of crusading, and like Pliable in the *Pilgrim's Progress* he scrambled out on the near side of the ditch, and returned to his own country.

Bertrand de Born, the troubadour, 'he who gave the evil counsel' which set the sons of Henry II. at war with their father, is one of the most remarkable characters of the third Crusade, two centuries later, and may be contrasted with William of Poitou. Of high lineage and lord of many lands in South Western France,[3] poet, soldier and man of pleasure, *preux chevalier* in honour and gallantry, excelling all his contemporaries in genius—'I never had need' (he said) 'of half the wit I have'—preferring the battle-cry to sleep,

[1] praise (laus).

[2] "Quoniam pauper et inops erat et hominibus carebat, omnino desolatus navem conscendens domum regressus est."

[3] Born is probably near Bordeaux.

> Io son Bertram dal Bornio, quelli
> Che al re giovane dicdi i mai conforti. Dante, *Inferno* xxviii. 134.

the brilliant and lawless side of chivalry. Such was his generosity, that when besieged by Alfonso II of Aragon, he sent him bread, wine and meat for his army, begging in return that he should not press a weak point in his castle. Alfonso repaid the gift by betraying him to Henry II. Though only a 'vavassour,' he lived on terms of such equality with Henry II. and his sons that he could call them by nicknames, Henry the *Mariner*, Richard *Oc e No*, (because he never knew his own mind), Geoffrey *Rassa*: Henry, he says 'shall be king of cowards: he is the kindest and most generous lord, the best jouster and man-at-arms since Roland.' But pride and violent passion made him quarrel with all the brothers, and he gratified his rage by turning them against their father, and breaking the old king's heart. His lady-love, of far higher degree than himself, was their sister Matilda, wife of Henry the Lion, Duke of Saxony. He calls her 'Helen.' She is as gold to sand, compared with the three beautiful sisters of Turenne. She glorifies the ducal crown by wearing it. Her rose-blushes rob him of his heart. He would not take Khorassan in exchange for the sight of her. When caught at last and imprisoned by his chief enemy Henry II, his captor said to him, 'Bertrand, you who were so clever, where are your wits now?' 'Ah sire,' (he answered) 'I lost them when I lost your son Henry.' The king's heart was touched by the thought of their common grief, and he released Bertrand with rich presents.

Bertrand de Born had all the chivalric disdain of churls, meat and drink, the idol of women and the terror of husbands, his gay, stormy, reckless figure seems a picture of

'I love to see the rich churl in distress, who dares to strive with the noble. I love to see him beg his bread in nakedness.' . . 'The peasant is like a hog. Keep his trough empty, lest he become rich and lose his wits.' Yet he can speak of *dreytura*, (rectitude, or rather honour, and specially honour in love,) good deeds, courtesy, liberality. These, with jousting and war, make the perfect knight. After all this worldly enjoyment and display, he ended his days as a Cistercian monk. Such a character is impossible in a sober age: in good and bad alike Bertrand de Born is brilliant, effective, and genuine, made up of praise and fierceness, savage virtue and genius, the pattern of his age.

In the whole period the most conspicuous names are those of Godfrey, Richard, Saladin, and Lewis IX: we have spoken already of Godfrey, and have only to add to what has been said of Richard a few traits which distinguish him from the other warriors of his time. His immense personal strength and skill and his reckless valour, were in the eyes of his contemporaries his most admirable qualities: his arrogance and violence were the attributes of his rank: his want of good faith was excused by almost universal laxity: his rapacity, cruelty and petty resentment were forgotten in the blaze of arms. He was admired for risking his life with many or few on every possible occasion, more than for his real capacity and forethought as a strategist and a builder of castles. But his own followers sometimes dared to remonstrate with him for his foolhardiness; and Saladin spoke severely of it to Hubert Walter, then Bishop of Salisbury. But indeed Richard's prowess was above all criticism. We read that wherever Richard rode a broad lane opened

before him :[1] that with only fifteen knights at his back he cleared away whole battalions of Saracens as soon as his war-cry 'God for us and the Holy Sepulchre!' was heard. Every one knows the story[2] of the Saracen women hushing heir children by the terror of Richard's name—'Tès-toi, por le roi d'Engleterre'[3] and of the cry to the restive horse, 'Cuides-tu ke le roi Richard soit mucié en cest buisson?' Every one knows also the deeds of swordsmanship, the lopping of arms and heads and cleaving of infidels to the saddle bow, which are the usual adornments of the Christian Iliads. We learn from Abulfeda[4] how Cœur de Lion with seventeen knights and three hundred archers from his encampment before the gates of Acre, rode furiously along the front of the Saracens, 'from the right to the left wing, without meeting an adversary who dared to encounter his onset. Am I writing" (exclaims Gibbon) 'the history of Orlando or Amadis?'[5]

It may be noted in passing that contemporary accounts both Christian and Arabian agree in ascribing to the Christian leaders athletic exploits which are barely credible even in men whose life was spent in warlike exercises, such as the feat attributed to Godfrey, who cut away the upper half

[1] 'Viam spaciosam ei dantes'; the same expression is used of the Cid: 'He made a wide path before him, wherever he turned his horse in battle.'

[2] Bernard le Trésorier.

[3] He is called by the Saracens 'Melech-Ric' and 'Anketar' (Angleterre); but usually 'King of England.' Joinville.

[4] Abulfeda, 51, 52. Bohadin, 184. Matt: Paris, 137. Vincent, vi. 14.

[5] Chap. 59, vi. 506.

of a Saracen, leaving the trunk and legs in the saddle,[1] the cleaving another from shoulder to saddle, the lopping of heads and arms at a single blow. As the same things are told of the Emperor Conrad, of Richard Cœur de Lion, and of others at a much later date, as du Guesclin and Clisson[2], there must be some foundation for them in fact. Few men now-a-days, if any, could leap on to the back of a dray horse in complete armour: but practice makes miracles possible. Nor need we treat as fabulous the story of Godfrey's combat with a bear, whether it was in defence of a pilgrim or for his own amusement: nor that of his cutting off the head of a camel with his own sword, and when his Saracen admirer suspected magic, doing the same to a second camel with the Saracen's own scimitar. Such deeds, if camels were plentiful, could probably be done by a modern trooper.

When Richard I arrived at Acre, the whole camp was lighted up with bonfires. The dejection of the Saracens was equal to the joy of the Crusaders; for Richard's presence in person was worth more than all the reinforcements and siege engines which he brought with him; and with Richard to conduct it the siege at once took another colour, incessant attacks being now made upon the town. The Saracen historians praise his 'sound judgment, great experience, and extreme boldness and ambition.'

At Joppa, with only ten knights (whose names have been preserved) he attacked the whole Saracen army. He and his knights were immediately engulphed, but fighting each

[1] Told by Wm. of Tyre, Raoul of Caen and Robert the Monk.

[2] Olivier de Clisson made havoc with a great axe in the midst of the French ranks. Olivier de Manny 'charpentoit partout avec lsa hache, ont il faisoit over testes bras et jambes.'

for himself they held the enemy in check and contributed greatly to the victory of the Christians. He appeared outside his camp at Acre with seventeen companions and three hundred foot, and rode along the whole line of the Saracen army, daring them to attack him—and Saladin, finding that his Emirs (among whom a mutinous spirit had appeared) would not support him, rode away from the sight in such fierce anger that 'no man dared speak to him.' At Arsouf, whilst conducting a dangerous flank march along the sea coast, exposed to attacks from the Saracen archery and light cavalry, Richard restrained for many hours the impatience of the Christian chiefs, including the Grand Masters of the Temple and Hospital, till he should give the signal by six trumpet-calls. Then only did he allow the infantry to open their ranks, and sent the heavy cavalry in three divisions to charge the enemy in right, centre and left. So complete was the rout of the Saracens, that, as their historians declare, the army would have been completely destroyed if the king, whose object was the relief of Ascalon, had pursued them to the hills.

Richard's generalship, shewn here and on many occasions, would, in the estimation of a later age, though not in that of his companions, give him a higher character as a soldier than his prowess as a man-at-arms. He learnt in the East how to combine cavalry with infantry and archers, and so mastered the science of fortification that his castle, Château Gaillard, was the best constructed in all Europe, and could only be rivalled by those built by the Crusaders in the East.[1]

[1]Krak des Chevaliers, the castle of the Hospitallers, near the Orontes, is the finest instance of these castles, some of which were twice as large as Coucy or Pierrefonds. It held a garrison of 2000 men.

Besides being the best man-at-arms in the Christian army, Richard was a troubadour, and was, both at home and in the intervals of fighting, the bountiful patron of troubadours. Among those who were with him in the Holy Land, are mentioned Bertrand de Born, Folquet of Marseilles, Pons de Capdeuil, Blondel of Nesle, his rivals in the gay science both of love and verse. Richard transferred to the Holy Land something like the court of his mother, Eleanor of Guienne, the queen of troubadours, who was herself credited with similar adventures when she came out, with a long train of ladies, to accompany her husband Lewis VII; but though Richard had many amours, he honoured his wife Berengaria above all ladies. The times had changed since the first Crusade, and every gentleman was now a squire of dames. The knights were not content with Christian lovers, but engaged in romantic and scandalous adventures with Saracen ladies. The Christian camp before Acre was a scene of such debauchery that Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury, after many vain endeavours to check it, died of pure grief of heart. Attempts were made from time to time to check these abuses, but without success. At Antioch (1097) and on other occasions, all women were removed from the camp. But they always came back. St. Lewis complained to Joinville that there was an establishment of loose women within a few yards of his royal tent, brought there by William Longsword;[2] and if he could not put the evil down, no one else could.

Richard's superiority to his insular English subjects was

[2]The younger, Earl of Salisbury. He and his father lie in Salisbury Cathedral.

shown by his introducing the frequent use of tournaments into England, to train knights for the Crusades,[1] and in order that the English knights might learn the newest arts of horsemanship and arms and lose the reputation of rusticity which they had acquired.[2]

Richard shewed magnanimity (amongst other instances) when he gave money to the man who had wounded him to death, and gave orders that his life should be spared; and again at Ramleh, when seeing a body of Templars outnumbered by the enemy, he cried 'I would to God they were aught else' (for he bore no love to the Templars); 'but Templars or not, I will not desert brave knights in their need.' He sent out such men as were ready, and his appearance in person soon after turned defeat into victory.

The other chivalric virtues, liberality, courtesy to women, magnificence in everything, Richard possessed in full measure. His vices were equally beyond the ordinary standard. He was a tyrannical king, who robbed his subjects and wasted their spoils;[3] savage and cruel in war, even beyond what the ideas of his age allowed; an undutiful son, an unfaithful husband, of doubtful honour both as regards friends and enemies, violent in anger and

[1] Matt: Paris 1194.

[2] Engleiz ne saveient joster
ne a cheval armes porter;
haches et gisarmes teneient;
ou tels armes se combateient.
(Rom. de Rou. Fr. iii. 474.)

[3] In his captivity, however, (whilst extorting vast sums from his subjects for his ransom) he laments over the bad conduct of affairs in England during his absence, and the inroads of the King of France.

tenacious of resentment. Pride, rapacity, and luxury, he admitted, were his three daughters; and he commended them severally to the care of the Templars, the gray monks, and the black monks.[1]

It was said that Richard, the champion of Christendom, had not confessed to a priest for seven years.[2] His death was a righteous vengeance for an act of tyranny; he had been a man of blood from his youth. But there is something pathetic in the story told of him, how, when for strategical reasons he had refused to march upon Jerusalem, and when his retreating army came in sight of the Holy City and one of his knights bade him look, he covered his head and held up his shield before his eyes, praying that God would not let him see the holy place which he had not been permitted to deliver; and in his last prayer that God would grant him a place in Purgatory even till the Day of Judgment, if that could wash away his sin.

There was an Alexander-like greatness in Richard, a kingliness which we, who see nothing like it in the world, have no right to disparage as mere barbaric ostentation. He was made for his own age; but he would have been a famous man in any age.

Richard I was but the finest instance of chivalry which the Holy Wars produced. The Holy Land was the play-ground of noble Europe, and every nation poured forth

[1] John of Brompton. Knighton gives it rather differently—The eldest daughter was to go to the Templars and Hospitallers, the second to the Cistercians or gray monks, the third to the prelates of the kingdom.

[2] He did penance in Sicily, and was scourged, like his father at Canterbury, to the great edification of the chronicler, John of Brompton (1190); and the severity of his last penance when he was dying of a gangrened wound, goes beyond all credibility.

worthy champions, among whom. John of Brienne, Edward of England, and his uncle Richard Earl of Cornwall, the Longswords, Robert Earl of Leicester, William de Barre, Conrad of Montserrat, the doge Dandolo, Leopold of Austria, may be named—but

> Every day brought out a noble chance,
> And every chance brought out a noble knight.

If Richard I was the greatest fighter of all the crusaders, he was surpassed in courtesy and true magnanimity by Saladin, who, from all we hear of him by the accounts both of Christian and Saracen, was indeed 'a very gentle perfect knight.'[1] The fierceness of the Christian chivalry had been by this time somewhat softened by the ceremonious life of courts and the society of ladies; and it is not unreasonable to believe that Christian knights learnt courtesy from the Saracens. Grave and dignified courtesy was in no country carried so far as in Spain, where the Christians were compelled to imitate and if possible surpass the graces of the Moorish knights.

> Caballeros Granadinos,
> Aunque Moros, hijos d'algo.[2]

The Arab knight matched the Spanish hidalgo in all the accomplishments of chivalry. Though wars between the two nations were frequent, there were long intervals of peace, during which they interchanged noble courtesies,

[1] Something which resembled knighthood was a custom in use among the Saracens. Joinville states that the Sultau's *baharis* or janissaries were brought up in his house till their beards grew. Then the Sultan made them knights. They bore the Sultan's arms with a difference. These arms were *or*; the janissaries added devices; roses, bands, birds, &c., *gules*, on a field *or*.

[2] 'Knights of Granada, though Moors, are gentlemen.'

jousted, hunted, and courted ladies in company. The Moorish ladies did not then veil their faces; they went hawking with the knights, and presided at tournaments.[1] Besides the well-known stories of Saracen maidens delivering Christian captives, many instances are found of intermarriage between Spaniards and Moors.[2]

A Christian obtained leave from his captor to visit his lady, giving his parole[3] to return. She would not leave him, and they came back together and were both released by the noble hearted Moor. 'Kindness, valour, knightliness, gentleness, poetry, courtly speech, strength, skill with the lance, the sword and the bow,' are the summary of a Moorish knight; and these excellencies were the pride of the Oriental Moslem as well as those of Cordova and Granada. As the Western nations learnt architecture, poetry, science and philosophy through their contact with the Arabs in the Eastern and Western Crusades, so their rough chivalry was rebuked and refined by the noble behaviour of the Saracens; and the character of Saladin himself counts for something in the sum. His fame as a knight was second to that of Richard alone. He was regarded as different from the rest of Islam. He is admitted by Dante to the milder region of Limbo, among the company of ancient worthies: the philosophers Avicenna and Averroes

[1] See for this the frescoes at the Alhambra, painted by a Florentine artist of the 15th century.

[2] After the siege of Acre, Saladin proposed that his brother Malek Ala, should marry Richard's sister and become king of Jerusalem; a project which failed because the Christian bishops attached the condition of baptism. (D' Herbelot and Sabaheddin.)

[3] *jurer prison* is the common phrase (Froissart).

are there too; but Saladin sits 'alone and apart.'[1] He was said to have accepted knighthood himself,[2] and there is no doubt that he sent the son of his brother, Melech-el-Adel, to be knighted by King Richard. He was also believed to have had a Christian wife.[3]

The life of Saladin has often been written from the accounts left by Arab historians who knew him intimately; Bohadin, Abulfeda, Kamel, and others. All give the same picture of a great king; a general, soldier, and ruler of the first rank, as much loved as he was feared, a man of strong passions kept under severe control, a devout Mohammedan, a lover of justice and clemency. These are the common attributes of an Oriental sovereign of the better class. It is a part easily played by a strong man. But to play it as Saladin did requires a rare genius. There is distinction in everything that he does. His personal charm was so great, that when he died, 'we left him,' (says Abulfeda,) 'leaving our hearts with him.' 'With him,' said an Arabian poet, 'the graces and virtues have perished, and injustice is multiplied.' At the same time his dignity and majestic demeanour made all men bow to him. When two Hospitallers were brought before him to be put to death (for he seldom spared Templars or Hospitallers) one of them said to the other, 'Before I saw that noble face '(béni et beau visage') I was afraid: but now that I am in his presence I

[1] Solo in parte vidi il Saladino.—*Inferno* iv. 129.

[2] See the *Ordene de la Chevalerie.*

[3] The natural daughter of Alfred Jourdain, Count of Toulouse. Her first husband was Nureddin, the predecessor of Saladin. She remained a Christian all her life.

feel sure that he can do us no harm.' Saladin enquired who they were, and released them both.

Ordinary prisoners of war he treated mercifully. His usual practice was to spare the common people of a Frankish town. He gave rich fur pelisses and other presents to prisoners of distinction, in some cases inviting them to his table, and giving them horses to ride to Damascus, or whatever place he had appointed for them to wait for their ransom. After the battle of Tiberias (1187), Saladin received the captive king of Jerusalem, Guy of Lusignan, with all honour, seating him at his side and letting him drink from his own cup. Renaud of Châtillon took the cup from the king's hand; but Saladin sternly remarked that Renaud, if he drank, did not drink with *him:* then fiercely reproached him as a traitor, and cut off his head with his own scimitar. The Grand Master of the Hospital and two hundred and thirty of his knights shared the same fate; for Saladin could be ruthless as well as merciful. Yet he allowed the knights of the Hospital to keep their home at Jerusalem for a year after the capture of the city, for the sake of the sick whom they tended. Saladin was gay and courteous in company, putting all his guests at their ease, with stories of ancient Arab chiefs and their horses, all of whose pedigrees he knew. He would not endure any low talk in his presence. He was gentle to slaves and poor people. When one of his friends threw a slipper at a comrade, missed him and struck the Sultan, he turned his head and looked the other way. In his last illness, when a cup of water was brought to him, too hot at first and then too cold, he shewed no anger, but only said, 'Is there no one who can give me a

cup of water?' Anyone else (says the chronicler) would have thrown the cup at the slave's head. When his two little sons asked him to give them a Frank prisoner to kill, he refused, and said 'it was not good for them to learn so young to play with life and death.' He spoke kindly to an aged Christian who had come from the far West to visit the Church of the Resurrection at Jerusalem, and gave him a horse to take him back to the Frankish camp. When Richard I cried out upon the crowds of pilgrims who had not done their duty at Jaffa, and yet wished to get the blessing of visiting the holy places, Saladin gave them meat with his servants, and excused himself by saying, 'they have come from so far; and our law does not suffer us to hinder them.' He helped a poor Frankish woman who came to him to complain that her little girl had been stolen from her by Saracen kidnappers; sent to the slave market for the child, and would not move from the place till she was found. 'God, thou didst make him merciful' (says the pious narrator) 'grant him to taste of thy mercy.' His natural sensibility shewed itself in tears, which sometimes scandalized his sterner friends; as when the Christian convoys escaped him at Ascalon. He wept at the fall of Acre 'as a mother weeps over her child'; and on another occasion, when he went out to meet a caravan from Mecca, and remembered that he had never been enough at leisure to go on pilgrimage. This same sensibility made him terrible in anger. He tore his beard with rage when Richard sank the great ship at Acre full of equipments and engines. After Richard's massacre of the Saracen prisoners there, he inflicted torture as well as death on Christians who fell into his hands; being

specially angered at breach of faith. He appears to have distrusted his own moods both of clemency and anger. He refused at first to make terms with the garrison of Jerusalem. 'As the Franks had stormed Jerusalem a hundred years before, so would he now; he would render evil for evil.' But when the besieged sent a message to say that they would defend the city to the last and then destroy the buildings and all that they contained, slay their wives, children, slaves and cattle, and die in the breach, he relented, and gave them honourable aud lenient terms of surrender. On the other hand, being inclined to spare a Christian prisoner of high rank and noble bearing, he rode out alone, and when he came back commanded him to be slain. Even in his vengeance upon Renaud de Châtillon he seems (according to one account) to have hestitated, and remanded his prisoner for further consideration.

Many stories of his courtesy are told. Seeing Richard dismounted he said 'So great a king should not fight on foot,' and sent him a charger to ride. The king mounted one of his knights instead—William Longsword, the elder, Earl of Salisbury, some say—whom the horse carried away with him to his own lines. Richard had no suspicion of his honour; but Saladin was deeply distressed ('fu mult honteus de ce') and sent the Earl back with a less fiery steed.[1]

[1] The same thing is related as having taken place at the battle of Joppa, when Richard with his ten knights was hard pressed. (We may compare the story of the Cid, who, when attacking thirteen Moors alone and unarmed, asked one of them to hand him a lance, and slew them all.) Other instances of his courtesy, mythical perhaps, but not out of character, may be read in the *Talisman*, *Ivanhoe*, and Lessing's *Nathan der Weise*, and in Abulfeda and Bohadin.

Saladin was so generous that he 'kept nothing for the morrow.' He had but one horse for his own use, and gave away thousands to his attendants. At his death no more than 47 silver drachms and a single dinar of Tyrian gold were found in his coffers.

Saladin's honour was never doubted. He had reason to doubt the good faith of a people who kept the Pope's dispensation up their sleeve, and whilst he had confidence in the good faith of the Templars, he appears to have felt special distrust of Richard Cœur de Lion; whom he refused more than once to meet, saying with much dignity that 'it was not becoming for kings to meet as friends and go to war again. Let the preliminaries of peace be settled first.'

Although he was a devout Mussulman, never omitting his religious duties, and loving to hear stories told of Mahomet and the saints, and though he had a perfect hatred of Christianity, and especially of Templars and Hospitallers, its most renowned defenders, the 'firebrands'[1] of the Christians, Saladin was neither superstitious nor bigoted. 'He did not set one day above another.' He was the only Oriental prince who practised something like toleration, and looked upon Chrisians and Mohammedans as his subjects and worthy of his protection. At Jerusalem he admitted the garrison and the inhabitants to an honourahle composition, and took no umbrage at the lamentations of the Christians when the golden cross was taken down from the Dome of the Rock. He gave Christians free access to the Holy Places, granted leave at the request of Hubert, Bishop of Salisbury[2] for two

[1] 'Carbones.'

[2] Afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury.

Latin priests and deacons to say mass at Jerusalem and Bethlehem, caring little for the reputation of a destroyer of false religion, so long as he protected the true religion. 'The only end of my wishes' (he said) 'is to die for God's cause.'

Christian chivalry has only one hero who may be set above the courteous, the humane, the generous Saladin, in comparison with whom Godfrey and Tancred seem uncultured. This is Lewis IX of France, the best and one of the greatest of kings; of whom, though he was a saint, Gibbon says that he 'united the virtues of a king, a hero and a man; that his martial spirit was tempered by the love of private and public justice; and that Lewis was the father of his people, the friend of his neighbour, and the terror of the infidels.'[1]

Few great men have been so fortunate in their biographer as Lewis IX. His friend, John, the Sire de Joinville, Seneschal of the County of Champagne, who accompanied him in his first crusade, and was admitted to the closest familiarity with his master, sums up his character in these words: 'Never did layman of our times live so devoutly during the whole of his days. . . . If God died on the cross, so did he; for he wore the cross when he was at Tunis.' Joinville was a man of the world, and was not blind to the weaknesses of the king; and this gives greater value to the picture which he has drawn of the statesman and soldier as well as the saint: a picture which sets Lewis by the side of Marcus Aurelius, and above Godfrey, Cromwell, and other rulers with whom religion has been the mainspring of action.

[1] Ch. lix. (vi. 515, Ed. 1855).

His personal habits were simple though not austere. He 'ate contentedly of what his cooks served up to him,' never asking for any particular dish: drank his wine mixed with water: never wore embroidered coats of arms nor rich furs, but justified those who did, saying that a gentleman should dress according to his rank, so that neither old men should say 'too much' nor young men 'too little.' 'I have seen him' (says Joinville) 'come in summer to do justice to his people, into the garden at Paris, dressed in a camlet cloak, a sleeveless surcoat of woollen stuff, a mantle of black taffety (*cendal*) round his neck . . . and a hat with white peacock's feathers. Carpets were spread for us to sit round him, and the people who had business to dispatch stood in front.' Thus too he would do justice in the woods at Vincennes, sitting on the ground with his back to an oak.

'Finding one day his brother, the Count of Anjou, playing at tables[1] on board ship with Monseigneur Walter de Nemours, he went to him, though so ill with fever that he could hardly walk, and threw the dice and the board into the sea. But' (says Joinville) 'Monseigneur Walter came off the best, for he swept all the money which was on the board into his lap and took it for himself.'

Joinville having put himself forward in advising that the King should not return to France, but stay and finish the campaign, was jeered at by other members of the Council. 'The King must surely be mad, Messire de Joinville, if he does not listen to you before the whole council of France!

[1] A gambling game, less respectable, it seems, than chess or draughts (*dames*), and perhaps more amusing. Templars and Hospitallers were forbidden to play at tables.

Then' (says Joinville) 'thinking that the king was angry with me, I went to a barred window that was in a recess near the head of the king's bed, and I passed my arms through the bars; and I was thinking that if the king went away to France I would go to the prince of Antioch. . . . While I was standing there, the king came and leaned upon my shoulders, and put his two hands upon my head. I thought it was Monseigneur Philip de Nemours, who had annoyed me incessantly all that day because of the counsel I had given to the king, and I said, "Leave me in peace, Monseigneur Philip!" By accident, as I turned my head round, the king's hand slipped down over my face, and I saw it was the king by an emerald he wore on his finger. And he said to me, "Keep still; I want to ask how so young a man as you had the hardihood to venture to counsel me to stay here, contrary to all the great and wise men of France who advised me to depart?" "Sire," said I, "it seemed to my mind an evil thing that you should return to France; therefore I would not, for any price, counsel you to do so."

'"Do you say," he asked, '"that I should act wrongly if I went away?"

'"Yes, sire," I answered; '"so help me God!"

'"Then said he: '"If I remain, will you remain?"

'"Yes, sire, if I can, either at my own charge, or at that of someone else."

"'Be at ease, then," he answered, '"for I am greatly obliged to you for the counsel you gave; but do not say so to any one all this week."'

His religion was as simple as his life. 'My chapel,' he said, 'is my arsenal against all the assaults (*traverses*) of

the world.' He pointed out a saintly monk to Joinville, and told him that once when this monk was sleeping in a draught, the Blessed Virgin had gone to his bedside and drawn her robe over his chest. When the Greek fire came flying through the air 'like a dragon,' he stretched his hands towards the crucifix and said 'Fair Sire God, preserve my people.' He would not speak to a Saracen lord who spoke French, and brought him presents, on hearing that he was a renegade.[1] When St. Lewis thought himself dying, and a lady sitting by him would have drawn the sheet over his face, saying that he was dead, 'our Lord wrought upon him and quickly sent him health. He demanded that the cross (*la crois d'outremer*) should be given him. . . . When the Queen, his mother, was told by himself that he had taken the cross, she showed as much grief as if he had been dead.' His lords were unwilling to leave their lands and houses a second time by going on crusade: but the king had privily ordered crosses to be sewn within the new mantles which he gave them, and so they were caught and had to go. One of them said 'If we do not take the cross, we shall lose the king's favour; and if we do, we shall lose God's favour, for we shall not take it on His account.' How much humility, loyalty, and piety there is, combined with French wit, in this saying. The day before he died, he was heard murmuring '*Nous irons à Jérusalem*'; and the next day, having lost the power of speech for some hours, he

[1] Octai Faress-ed-Din, chief of the Mamelukes, begged the king to give him the honour of knighthood: but he refused what Richard had granted to Saladin's nephew, unless the Emir would become a Christian.

said 'Lord, I will enter Thy house and adore Thee in Thy Holy Tabernacle.' These were his last words.

Lewis however was no monk in king's clothing. He was one of the strongest rulers and best soldiers of the day. His justice was of the patriarchal type. He respected a broken seal, because it tallied with one unbroken. He forgave a clerk who had shown excessive valour in self-defence and killed three robbers; 'Sir clerk, you have missed being a priest through your prowess: and because of your prowess, I take you into my service, and you shall go with me beyond sea.' His judgments could be very severe, and when once passed he was unwilling to revoke them: but he sometimes allowed himself to be persuaded. He gave benefices after taking counsel with worthy persons, 'loyally, and to God.' He would allow no pluralism. He looked out the best man he could find for the provostship of Paris (which had been sold to the highest bidder in former times); one who would see that thieves and other evil-doers did not remain unhanged.

For courage and feats of arms Lewis IX would have been worthy to be a brother in arms of Richard himself. At Damietta, as soon as he heard that the Oriflamme of St. Denis had been borne ashore, he leaped into the water up to his armpits in full armour; and when he got to land and saw the Saracens, 'he clapped his lance under his arm, threw his shield in front of him, and would have rushed upon them, had the discreet men who were with him suffered him.' His appearance in battle is thus described by Joinville:—'Never have I seen so fine a knight ('si bel homme d'armes'); for he towered above all his people, out-

topping them by the shoulders, a gilded helmet on his head and a German sword in his hands . . . It was said that we should have been lost that day had not the king been with us . . . for six Turks seized the king's horse by the bridle and were leading him away prisoner; but he delivered himself from them single-handed, by the mighty sword strokes he dealt them.' When, after these deeds of arms, the king retired to his tent for a respite, 'then came up to him Brother Henry de Ronnay and kissed his gauntleted hand. The king asked him if he had any tidings of his brother the Count of Artois,[1] and he replied that he had very good news of him, for he was quite certain that he was in Paradise. . . . Whereupon the king said that God should be praised for the good gifts He gave; and then big tears fell from his eyes.'

When taken prisoner by the Sultan Bibars and threatened with torture, he only said, 'I am your prisoner, and you can do as you please.' He refused to make oath that if he did not keep faith with the Saracens he was content to be dishonoured as a Christian who denies God and spits upon the cross. 'He would rather die a good Christian, than live hated by God and His Mother.' His simple word was accepted at last—a king's word of honour requiring no confirmation by oath.[2] He took so high a tone with his captors that they declared it was they who were being treated as prisoners. 'A king,' he said, 'does not set himself to ransom. Damietta shall be my ransom, and the million

[1] Robert of Artois had lost his own life and the hopes of victory by attacking Mansourah against orders.

[2] So Saladin accepted the word of Richard without oath.

bezants shall be for my army.' The Sultan was so much moved by his magnanimity and good faith that he voluntarily reduced the ransom and exclaimed, 'This Frank prince is the boldest (le plus fier) Christian that has ever been seen in the East!' Another instance of his scrupulous honour was in the matter of his brother's ransom, when he insisted upon an alleged deficiency being made good, though Joinville protested, saying that the Saracens were the greatest rogues in the world. 'He was the most loyal man of his time . . . and kept faith even with Saracens, and to his own disadvantage.'

After the king's return from over sea, 'he lived so devoutly that he never afterwards wore furs of different colours, nor minever, nor scarlet cloth, nor gilt stirrups or spurs; his dress was of camlet or dark blue cloth; and the linings of his coverlets and garments were of doe-skin or hares' legs. He was bountiful to the poor, and gave large donations to poor friars, hospitals, sick persons, poor gentlemen, dames and damsels. . . . Many a time have I seen him cut bread and pour out drink for the poor people, a multitude of whom he fed every day. . . . Wherever the king went 120 poor persons had a meal of bread, wine and meat or fish.' He told Joinville that he ought not to hold poor men in scorn, for God had made them: and hearing from Joinville that he did not wash the feet of the poor on Holy Thursday, he said 'Would not you do what the King of England (Henry III) does, who washes and kisses the feet of lepers?' He was a great builder of churches and abbeys. 'As a writer who has finished his book illuminates it with gold and azure, so did the king illuminate his king-

dom with fair abbeys, Hôtels-Dieu, and convents of Dominicans, Franciscans and others.'

If the last Crusades are ennobled by the example of Lewis IX and the simple piety and honesty of his biographer, it is impossible to read the history of the Holy Wars in general without becoming aware that, as they went on, the mixture of worldly motives is greater; whilst at the same time there is less violence and more respect for the enemy. Godfrey and his companions are Homeric heroes; Lewis IX and his knights are mediæval gentlemen. The contrast is all the more striking, because both are described by writers who lived among them; there is no legendary exaggeration of the acts done by the early or later crusaders. As Gibbon says, there is both cause and effect in this. The development of chivalry softened manners; and every refinement of manners effected by external causes helped to develop chivalry. The ideals of chivalry were heightened during the two centuries of the Crusades; and the *preux chevalier* of the 13th century was more complex and refined than the *preux chevalier* of the 11th. He was not more devout, more chaste, more courageous, or more honourable; but he added a grace to these virtues, and had a higher and more conscious aim. The balance of advantages between the simpler and the more complex life can never be struck; we admire Cincinnatus, but we would choose to live with Marcus Aurelius. The vices of civilised men may be viler than those of barbarians, but their virtues are more illustrious.

The failure and death of Lewis IX left the Holy Land defenceless. Acre alone remained till 1291, when the

history of Christian wars in the East ended in a blaze of glory only to be matched by the exploits of Godfrey and Tancred. The tide of Turkish conquest crept over the sacred islands and the mainland of Greece; but the kings of Europe, occupied in taking to themselves the power of their great vassals, or making war upon each other on a grander scale than in the feudal age, had no leisure for the affairs of the East. Jerusalem was trodden under foot of the Gentiles, the Holy Places were barred from access, and there were no pilgrims to protect. The knights had gone to Rhodes, to the forests and morasses of Lithuania and Prussia, to the borders of Andalusia, or to their fair manors in Europe. No English prince after Edward I sailed eastward on crusade, though some Englishmen and Scots fought against the Moors in Spain, and Henry IV was not the only king of England who proposed to go to Jerusalem but never found the opportunity. Pius II, the elegant and worldly Aeneas Silvius, did his best to stir up Christendom, not to conquer Palestine, but to defend Europe, but in vain.

Even in the fourteenth century the preaching of Raymond Lull and the embassies of the Venetian Sanuto did no more than induce Edward II and Philip V to take the cross, and having taken it, to stay at home; and a hundred years later, when Constantinople had fallen and the Turkish power menaced the existence of Christianity and civilization, the courts of Western Europe, instead of combining for common defence under the patronage of the Holy See, amused themselves with the puerilities of costly tournaments and pageants. Holy Church appeared as a lady in mourning weeds menaced by a Saracen in a castle upon the back

of an artificial elephant. But no crosses were taken to defend her. The lords and knights of the Duke of Burgundy made vow 'upon the pheasant' to defend the lady—and all that came of it was tilting and fighting, *corps à corps*, two to two, three to three, and so on. The ideals of polite society in the fifteenth century had nothing in common with those of the crusaders.

Constantinople fell, the Ottoman Turks pressed in over all the Danubian lands, and were only checked by John Sobieski at Vienna in 1683, and by the rise of the Russian power. No new Crusade is likely to be taken in our days. But Islam is still the enemy of Christendom, the obstacle to progress and humanity in the East. The Turkish empire serves as a makeweight in the balance of Europe, and the interests of the oppressed nations are little considered in comparison with the jealousies of the Great Powers. But we may hope that at no distant date the yoke of the Greek and Anatolian populations will be broken, and that the blessings of self-government may arise out of the ruins of a government which has lost the virtues of its prime, and exists only as a burden to the earth and a scandal to Christendom.

The larger results of the Crusades may be studied in histories. Their effect upon chivalry, so far as it can be separated from the general aspect of the subject, may be summed up in the estimation of knighthood, with its accompaniments of gentility, precedence and heraldry, as a common possession of all Christian nations, and the exaggeration of its claims to respect; the exaltation and sudden downfall of the Military Orders, and the establishment of orders of knighthood as an ornament of noble

birth, not an engine of warfare; improvement in the art of war, including the appreciation of infantry and archery (though this lesson was slowly and imperfectly learnt), the consequent weakening of the feudal armoured cavalry, and as a further consequence the subordination of the single soldier to the mass; an increase in the number and strength of castles, which by a combination of many causes fell into the hands of the kings and tended in most countries to the increase of royal power, and the decay of petty sovereignty and private war; and following upon all this, the decline of chivalry as a factor in politics; a development of trade, and with it more opportunities of luxury, and consequently an increase of splendour in all the externals of chivalry; a great development in all the arts of peace, a more liberal culture, a finer courtesy and social sensibility; a keener sense of honour, an improvement in the position of women, from an infusion of Eastern gallantry into the 'gay science' of the West; but above all, greater intercourse among the Christian powers, and the growth of diplomacy and alliances, and of continuous policy in the place of the irregular wars of the Middle Ages; out of which grew up the state system of modern Europe.

The failure of the Christians, after two centuries of effort, to establish a Frank dominion in the East, was the deathblow to knight-errantry. It made a brave show in the wars of Edward III, and the personal character of the Black Prince and Du Guesclin, as well as the speculative value of ransoms, give vitality to what was already tending to decay; here and there the spirit of adventure found an outlet in the wars of Granada: but generally speaking, and

especially in England, the least feudal and least European of the Western nations, war became a business carried on by kings in the name of their nations, not an amusement for lords and gentlemen. The last appearance of feudalism in the field was at the battle of Bosworth: manor-houses took the places of castles, the tournament was substituted for the levy in arms, the show for the reality. The general prosperity and well-being of all classes in England was a check upon military enterprise; men turned their thoughts from war to religious and political disputes, and with the decline of the military spirit, the spirit of chivalry languished.

We have no space to dwell upon the Crusade of the Albigenses, the conquest of the Baltic lands, or the wars against the Moors. So long as they lasted, they served to keep alive the traditions and professions of chivalry, and first among them those of honour and personal courage. They had also a bad effect, as being wars waged, not for the settlement of disputes, but for the destruction of an irreconcileable enemy; for the courtesies which were exchanged between Spaniards and Moors so long as the balance was kept even, were no longer observed when the *Reyes Católicos* set themselves to accomplish the destruction of Granada; and the treatment of the Moriscos by their descendant Philip II is one of the worst chapters in history.

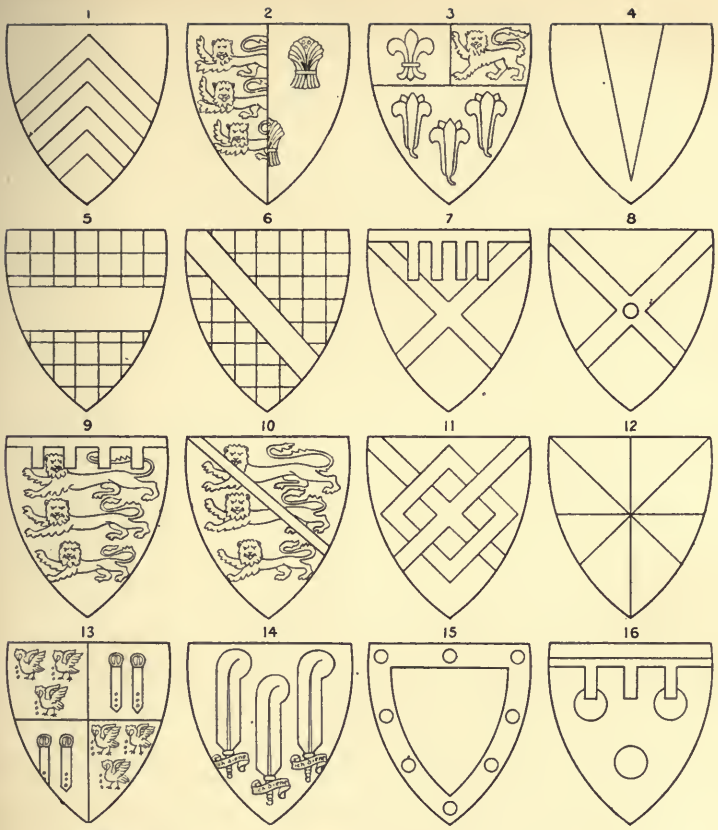
CHAPTER VII

Heraldry

Heraldry a help to the study of history—Date and origin uncertain, fully established 1100-1200—Ancient use of devices in all countries—Mediæval heraldry German—At first personal, then attributed to families—Early instances of armorial bearings—*Cottes d'armes*, shields, banners and pennons—Instances of each—Decoration of shield—Shields on seals—Crests, badges, supporters—Crusades—Eastern origin of armory—Use of arms as cognisances in war—Disguises—The Black Knight, the Green, Red Knight—Jealous retention of heraldry—Strict definition in the 13th century—*cri d' armes*—Augmentations of honour—Disputed arms, Scrope and Grosvenor, etc.,—Poictiers—Cadency—Alliance—Grants of arms—Arms of assumption—Earl Marshal's Court—College of Arms—Modern heraldry—Reality of mediæval heraldry.

Heraldry, which is not uncommonly despised as a sham science, or at best regarded as an ancillary study apart from real history, has a historical value of its own, if only from the fact that it was held in high honour for many centuries; during which it was the chosen, we may even say the sacred symbol of that hierarchy of birth, royal, noble and gentle, which distinguished the bearer of arms from the trader and the churl, and on which all society was based.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to assign an exact date or origin to the institution of heraldry, which played so large a part in the external development of chivalry. The treatises on the subject afford little help towards the solution



1. GILBERT DE CLAVE 1140. 2. CITY OF CHESTER. 3. ETON COLLEGE. 4. CHANDOS. 5. CLIFFORD (diffrenced with a fess). 6. CLIFFORD. 7. NEVILE (diffrenced with a label). 8. NEVILE (diffrenced with a roundel). 9. EDWARD, ELDEST SON OF HENRY III. 10. HENRY OF LANCASTER, BROTHER OF THOMAS, EARL OF LANCASTER 1301. 11. VERNON. 12. CAMPBELL. 13. PELHAM (with augmentation). 14. BADGE OF THE BLACK PRINCE (from his tomb at Canterbury). 15. (with a lion rampant crowned) RICHARD EARL OF CORNWALL, BROTHER OF HENRY III. The bezants in the bordure are from the arms of the county. 16. COURTENAY (diffrenced with a label, which afterwards became part of the coat of arms). 17. STANDARD OF SIR HENRY STAFFORD 1475 (Cross of St. George, Stafford knot, Bohun swan).

[*Face page 154.*

of this question, and the facts must be ascertained from the evidence of seals, illuminated manuscripts, and architectural records in stained glass and sculptured wood and stone.

It may be stated as certain that heraldry as a science, *i.e.* the exclusive attribution of certain bearings to certain persons and their descendants, and the establishment of tinctures, honourable ordinaries, marks of cadency etc., had no existence before the year 1100,[1] though fully developed and accepted throughout Europe by the end of the 12th century, or the early part of the 13th; but the first beginnings of heraldry are of an earlier date.

No records are known to exist, down to a late period of the Middle Ages, of any College of Heralds, in this or any other country, which had authority to reduce heraldic customs into a single code or customary. The heraldry of different nations is not identical, though similar, and has had various developments, which may be compared to the variety of ecclesiastical uses, or of architectural styles; but it appears pretty certain that in the 13th century heralds of all countries worked under similar rules, and obeyed a multitude of minute regulations common to all Europe, as was the case with many other chivalric institutions.

The use of emblems and mottoes is of immemorial antiquity. It existed among the Greeks and Romans, and among Oriental nations. Not to multiply instances, the Seven Heroes, according to the poets and vase-painters,

[1] We may perhaps put the date a little further back for Germany. If the writ is genuine, Otho I, in 963 grants to the family of Del Ponte to add his own name to theirs, and to wear an eagle in their arms; *familiam nominare et insignis aquilam superaddere.* (Ducange, *Dissert.*, xxv. but Ducange throws a doubt upon the genuineness of the letters patent.)

bore separate cognisances at the siege of Thebes. The Roman she-wolf, the badges of noble houses at Rome, the crescent of Islam, the lion of Persia, the imperial symbols of China and Japan, the insignia of Mexico and Peru, are all instances of heraldry. And to these we may add such legendary heraldry as the dragon of Uther Pendragon, the three crowns of Arthur, the golden dragon of Wessex.[1]

Mediæval European heraldry had its origin among the German tribes, and was introduced into Gaul by the Franks. At first, and until the 12th or 13th century, armorial devices were personal, not hereditary, such as the dragon on the shield of Duke William in the Bayeux Tapestry, though we may except from this general rule such instances as the white horse banner of the West Saxons, the Danish raven, and possibly the lily of France.[2] In MSS. anterior to the Conquest the shields are painted white or blue. Those hung on the ships in the Bayeux Tapestry are plain. Wace (writing c. 1150) says the Normans had *cognoissances* or *convenances* for distinction. The earls of Chester in the reign of William II have armorial cognisances, but borne as personal, not family distinctions. William Count of Flanders (c. 1160) bears the lion rampant of Flanders on shield, helmet, and banner, and this is claimed at a much

[1] Edmonson, *Heraldry*.

[2] The lily of France is known to have fallen from Heaven—but whether in the time of Noah (Noachi aevo) or in 500 A.D., the heralds were not agreed. (Spelman, *Aspilogia*. 44) It is found among royal insignia in a MS. of the 9th century, and is held with or without a staff in the right hand of all the French kings down to Lewis IX on their seals. But the *fleuron* or fleur-de-lys is used in the same way by counts not of the royal house, ladies, ecclesiastics, and in figures of saints, and it is borne by English Kings and German Emperors.

earlier date, but doubtfully.[1] The continental coinage of Henry II shews a lion. The Norman dukes bore two lions passant. Richard I bears at one time a lion rampant (or perhaps two);[2] at another the three leopards or lions passant guardant, the third lion being the lion of Guienne, which have been since his time the arms of England. His brother, Prince John, bears two lions passant (not passant guardant).

Selden, writing in 1614, puts the beginning of hereditary armory 'about 400 years since,' *i.e.* the early part of the 13th century. Before that time, he says, arms were worn by noblemen 'of their own fancy' to distinguish the leaders and their soldiers in the field.[1]

No historical evidence, however, is needed to assure us that the cognizances of a father would be continued by his son, and that other descendants also would be likely to adopt them, with some personal mark of distinction; and in fact 'differences' and 'marks of cadency' appear as early as the hereditary use of arms.

Setting aside a few instances which may date back as far as the middle of the 12th century, there is a large body of evidence derived from seals, French and English, to prove that the assumption of armorial devices came in about 1170-80, and became hereditary soon after. The alerions of Montmorency appear in 1177. Geoffrey de Pagonel (1187) bears two lions rampant. Conan Count of Soissons bears no arms on his seal of 1172, a lion passant in 1178. So Matthew Count of Beaumont-sur-Oise has a seal without

[1] See Mabillon, Bk. II. Ch. xviii., p. 146.

[2] Probably two, rampant addorsed; but the artist shews only half the shield in the great seal. (Spelman, *Aspilogia*, p. 45.)

arms in 1177, in 1189 a lion rampant. In 1150 or earlier, Enguerrand Count of St. Pol has no arms on his shield, but scattered over the field of the seal are garbs (wheat-sheaves) five of which a little later became the arms of his family. Bruce (1158) bears fleur-de-lys and birds, but not on the shield; his son has fleurs-de-lys; Gospatrick (1150) a dragon; Roger Mowbray (1150) a central boss, and crosslets; his grandson, Nigel, an escarbuncle, shewing the genesis of that bearing from the boss and radiating bars.

It is questioned whether heraldic devices were in the first instance borne on clothes, shields or banners. It is probable that no answer can be given to this question. *A priori*, it would seem likely that the figure on the flag, a primeval heraldry, was transferred to the shield and surcoat; but the evidence of monuments is not conclusive, the pennon's marks being no more distinctly heraldic than those of the shield. The first pennons are plain, or marked with a cross or a pattern of crosses. Early mention is made of the Oriflamme[2] banner of the Abbey of St. Denys, which became the sacred flag of France; of the Beauséant, the black and white standard of the Templars, white for God's friends, black for his enemies; these may be compared to the raven standard of the Danes, and the White Horse of the Saxons; not yet heraldic, but adopted into heraldry as

[1] p. 157—'Yet was not the said hereditary use established or made general, until the time of King Henry III; for (saith Cambden) the last Earls of Chester, the two Quincys Earls of Winchester, the two Lacys Earls of Lincoln, etc., varied still the son from the father, as might be particularly proved." Guillim, *Display of Heraldry*, p. 6 (1724).

[2] *Oriflour*, *oriflambe*, *auriflamma*. The *oriflamme* was a banner of scarlet silk or taffetas, square, with three tails ('d'un vermeil samit, de cendal roujoiant") garnished with knots or tufts *(houppes)* of green silk (Ducange, *Dissert*: XV.)

soon as the heraldic idea took shape. Devices on shields were as ancient as shields themselves, and assumed an armorial appearance before true heraldry was invented. William of Poitou bore the image of one of his ladies (a viscountess) on his shield. This is very early heraldry (1087-1127), not yet fixed (for he is said to have also borne a leopard), but connected with chivalry, and unlike the instances from the Bayeux Tapestry. Flags bore devices at least as early as the beginning of the Roman Empire. Coats of arms, (*cottes d'armes*), are said to have been derived from the ancient Gaulish *sagum* or the long Frankish frock or surcoat, if the two are not identical. According to another theory, they were adopted from the Saracens, who wore them to prevent their coats of mail (*broigne*) from being heated by the sun. These surcoats, or *jupons*, whether worn in war or peace, were ornamented with powderings, badges and other charges (*poudré, semé*); and in many instances this may have preceded the use of them on the shield. A familiar instance is the coat of France (ancient) *azure* powdered with fleur-de-lys *or*. Mowbray bears a lion *argent* on a field *azure* powdered with cross crosslets, and la Warr the same arms with *gules* for *azure*. The Plantagenet effigies at Fontevraud have also powderings, and so have the equestrian figures on many of our Great Seals. The *cottes d'armes* were also ornamented with bands of gold and colours, and trimmed with fur. It is probable that the 'honourable ordinaries,' chief, fess, bend, etc., were conventional adaptations of scarves, tippets, or belts of coloured leather or fur (*pannos decisos et laqueatos*,[1]) like the bars of ermine or catskin

[1] Ducange, *Dissertation* I.

on peers' robes. The well-known story of Leopold of Austria, is (though of later date) an illustration of this. At the siege of Acre he went into battle wearing a white tunic: when he came out his tunic was 'total gules,' except where the belt round his body had protected the white; hence the arms of Austria, said to have been granted to Leopold by Frederick, Duke of Swabia, (titular emperor, and the father of Frederick Barbarossa) *gules* a fess *argent*. The word fess comes from *fascia*, a band. Label (*labeau*, *lambeau*) denotes a tippet worn round the neck with tags of fur or stuff depending from it, such as may be seen in many effigies and portraits. They still survive in the ornaments of peers' robes, and the 'guards' which distinguish ranks in the peerage. Bend is *band*. The names given in heraldry to furs point the same way. Vair *(varium)* is properly a mantle of the skins of stoats or martens disposed alternately back and front; ermine (*Armenie*) is the fur of an Oriental variety; minever is *menu vair;* gules is said by Ducange to mean fur dyed red ('murium rubricatas panniculas quas *gulas* vocant'), and the word *gula* (throat) is used for a collar or tippet.[1] Sable, (Slavonic *sobol*) black sable-skins—the black variety being the most valuable. In the days when most of the land was waste, and beasts of prey great and small were plentiful, fur was more commonly worn than in later times; and certain furs were early set apart as badges of rank. It is recorded by Joinville as a mark of humility in Lewis IX, that after his return to

[1] Ducange, *s.v.* quoting St. Bernard and other authorities. *Gules* is derived by Diez, but doubtfully, from the Latin *conchylium*, purple: Littré follows Ducange. Another derivation is *gul*, in Persian, a rose.

France from Egypt, he never wore furs of different colours, nor minever, but only plain camlet or cloth, with linings of doeskins or the legs of hares; and his retainers wore only coats of taffetas *brodés de ses armes*..

When heraldry was in full repute, lords and ladies wore on occasions of ceremony their complete heraldic 'achievement.' '*Revêtu de son blason*' is the French phrase. Effigies of knights from the 13th century onwards usually wear such surcoats. The body of Robert of Artois was mistaken by the Saracens for that of his brother St. Lewis, because of his *cotte d'armes*. The tabards of heralds and kings-at-arms are a survival of this custom, instances of which are plentiful in mediæval MSS. and on sepulchral figures. The same view of the origin of arms will explain such coats as those of Brittany (*ermine*) d'Albret (*gules*), St. Chaumont (*azure*), and Buch (*or*); which last bearing (with roses, bands, birds, etc., for 'difference') is also[1] attributed to the Sultan of Egypt in the time of St. Lewis.

The bearing of lions, eagles, etc., probably came from cognisances on pennons and shields; of parts of animals, especially heads, horns and plumes, from decorations of helmets. German warriors often adorned their helmets with horns of the bison or aurochs, as for instance, the Count of Boulogne at the Battle of Bouvines (1215)[2]. The heads of wolf, bear or boar, were worn in the same way, resembling the skins worn over head and shoulders by standard-bearers in the Roman legions.

It is probable that the wearing of ordinaries as parts of

[1] Joinville. [2] Oman, *Hist. of the Art of War*, i., 511.

dress, and the use of devices on shields, went on simultaneously, the ordinaries being transferred from dress to shield, and conversely the pictorial emblems from shield to dress. In many instances the two were combined; and by degrees the whole 'coat of arms' would be borne indifferently on dress, shield, banner, and housings.[1]

It may be observed that some simple charges, such as the cross and saltire, the bordure, roundel, escarbuncle, and possibly the bend, fess, pale, chief, quarter, and gyron, were taken from the *umbo* or central boss of the shield, the studs of metal, and iron staves and rim, used to strengthen the shield, and that these ornaments were continued long after heraldic figures were introduced. The central boss may be seen in company with armorial devices in the Bayeux tapestry, in an ancient manuscript at St. Gall, on the shields carried by Icelandic chessmen, in the Plantagenet enamel at Le Mans (which has boss, cross, and lions), on the seal of Roger Mowbray (1150), and on many early seals. Where the boss and radiating bars are combined, as in the shields of Nigel Mowbray, Jourdain Tessor, and Balliol (1190) we have the so-called escarbuncle. A good instance, dated 1141 and probably not later than 1180, is the effigy ascribed to Geoffrey de Magna Villa (Mandeville) in the Temple Church. He carries a kite-shaped shield with a floriated escarbuncle. The boss and staves would appear to have been removed,

[1] See the equestrian figures on most of our Great Seals.

SEAL OF WILLIAM DE MANDEVILLE.—Cott. Ch. x. 1.
SEAL OF GILBERT DE CLARE.—Archæologia, Vol. li.

[*Face page 162.*

as unnecessary and as interfering with blazoned arms, from the small triangular ('heater') shield which in the 12th and 13th centuries took the place of the Norman kite-shaped shield, some four feet long, which is figured in the Bayeux Tapestry and on the monument of William Longsword at Salisbury.

Whatever the origin of armory, at the time of its full development in the 13th century it was considered to belong especially to the shield. Badges and devices are used for all kinds of decoration; but the coat of arms as the personal or family 'achievement' is blazoned on the shield. The use of seals in attestation of documents was brought in from Normandy by Edward the Confessor;[1] and English heraldry no doubt came in with the Conqueror. Early in the next century, princes, nobles, and gentlemen, commonly seal with the 'seal of their arms,' and ecclesiastics with the arms of their benefice. In the equestrian seals of the Kings of England and other princes the shields are either blank, or held so as to show the inner side. The first English royal seal with arms is that of John, son of Henry II. The first which shows the three lions[2] passant guardant is that of his brother Richard. *Rictus*

[1] Freeman, *Conquest of England.*—Doubt has been thrown on the authenticity of seals attributed to Edward the Confessor, which (it is suggested) were forged in the interest of the Abbey a century later. As for the so-called arms of the Confessor, Spelman can find no trace of their existence beyond the appearance of a cross and four birds 'non apodes sed antipodes' on some of his coins. (*Aspilogia*, p. 41, 1654.)

[2] Or leopards (lion léopardé); adopted, it has been thought, from the cognisance of his grandfather, Wm. of Poitou.

agnosco leonum illius in clipeo says a contemporary. Gervase of Pagonel, about the same date, bears two lions passant: the lilies of France first appear heraldically on the seal of Lewis VIII. (1223), and about the same time the alerions of Montmorency.

Some earlier instances may be cited, going back as far as the middle of the 12th century; the most ancient of all, at least in England, being that of Gilbert de Clare (1140), the three chevronels or gables borne on a shield.

Roger Mowbray (1145) has shield and surcoat semé of crosslets: the received arms of Mowbray are *gules* a lion rampant *argent.* Holland bears *azure* flory (semé of fleurs de lys) a lion rampant guardant *argent.* Walter Fitz Alan (1170) bears a fess chequy: the swallows (*hirondelles*) of Arundel are of the same date, (an early instance of *armes parlantes*) and the enamel portrait of Geoffrey Plantagenet (if it be he) shows a shield semé of lions rampant—or shall we say *lioncels*, since the king of beasts can only ramp alone? If genuine, Queen Margaret's martlets[1] are earlier still. The shield bearing the lion rampant of Flanders is claimed, but doubtfully, for as early a date as 1024. There is no heraldry on the Plantagenet monuments at Fontevraud—and in the stained glass of the Abbé Suger (c. 1140) at St. Denis,[2] though shields with devices appear, there is nothing that can properly be called heraldry.

A stronger instance is that of the Bayeux Tapestry. Here

[1] Known only from copies. Margaret of England is reputed to have put up the cross and martlets of the Confessor and her father Edmund Ironside at Dumfermline, but this requires confirmation.

[2] Edmonson.

many shields are depicted, some blank with a bordure, some charged with crosses and balls, probably rods and studs of metal (like those described in Homer) besides the large central boss; and a few with dragons and lions. Of these latter Montfaucon says that they are not armory but *un pur caprice*. We may remark however, that the lion is represented as 'reguardant,' a conventional heraldic position. If any distinction can be made, it may be held that the cross is an English bearing, and that dragons and lions were borne by the invaders: for instance, the 'nuncii Willelmi' have dragons on their shields, and the men of Guy of Ponthieu, lion, dragon, and escarbuncle.

Side by side with the ceremonious heraldry of inherited coats of arms, is that of crests, badges, and supporters. Crests, as a strictly heraldic device, are said to be of later date than arms, and to have been originally favours worn in the tournament. But Richard I on his great seal has a lion passant on his helmet, and Geoffrey Plantagenet the same, in the enamel plaque at Le Mans.

Crests were originally only worn by captains in the field. One of the earliest forms of the crest was a *panache* or plume of feathers; the plume is shown in a conventional form like a fan (probably made of leather) in the seal of Richard I and others; it appears also on the horse's head. The plume of feathers is a common crest, *e.g.*, Tyndall, Arundel, Pelham, Scrope, Thorpe. Wings are also frequent, especially in German heraldry: *e.g.*, on the seal of Ottocar II King of Bohemia (1253-1261).

At a later period, crests are always associated with armorial bearings. They often contain allusions to personal

feats of arms, *e.g.*, Dawnay, a Saracen's head and a lion's jamb, the naked man of Dalziel, the Union Jack in the crest of the Duke of Wellington.

The 'Green Knight' from Spain, who made such a brilliant figure at the siege of Acre wore a pair of stags' horns as a crest; and a pair of bulls' horns are one of the commonest crests in German heraldry.

Crests were frequently personal, not hereditary, *e.g.* the white swan of De Bohun borne by Henry Bolingbroke.

Badges, whether personally used in tournaments or as family and hereditary decorations of livery and household appointments, play a large part in mediæval heraldry. Familiar instances are the white hart of Richard II, the white boar of Richard III, the Tudor greyhound, the Bohun swan, the bear and ragged staff of Leicester, the sun of York, the red, white, and Tudor roses, the Beaufort portcullis, the pomegranate of Katharine of Aragon. To badges we may add knots, as those of Stafford, Bourchier, Wake and others.

Supporters (not found before Richard II) are supposed to have been originally the servants of the knight, fantastically habited as 'savage men,' Saracens, or wild beasts, who held their lord's shield at the lists, or at any pass which he was to defend against all comers. James IV. of Scotland 'let proclaim a tournament through Germany, France and England in defence of the salvage knight.' Shields so supported were laid on the side (*couché*); and this position was held to indicate that the bearers had been admitted to former tournaments, *i.e.* were acknowledged to be noble.

It is commonly said that the 'science' of heraldry was imported from the East at the times of the Crusades, and the oriental origin of terms such as *azure*,[1] *gules*, *sinople*,[2] *bezant*,[3] goes to support this. All European customs were modified by the Crusades, and heraldry among them: but oriental heraldry was never reduced into a strict system like that which was set up in Europe long before the close of the Crusades; and it is less likely that armory was adopted in imitation of the Saracens, than that it was found necessary to mark one body of men at arms from one another in a mixed host, containing a multitude of captains eager for glory and emulous of distinction. The Cross, as opposed to the Crescent, with its many varieties, has a whole heraldry of its own. No heraldry, however, properly so called, existed at the time of the first Crusade: the Cross being, like the Roman Eagle, of no private signification, except as distinguishing those who bore it from the rest of their countrymen.

Mistakes have occurred in modern battlefields, where all is ordered by one commander, through friends mistaking each other for enemies. In mediæval war this was more likely to happen, when the champions led each his own party, and desultory fighting went on all over the field. Battalions might be distinguished by banners, as the forces of the lord Edward were recognised at Evesham; but the individual champion, on whom the fortunes of his men at arms might depend according as he acquitted himself, needed a personal mark of distinction. Robert Duke of Normandy,

[1] *azul* Persian, *lazvard*, *lapis* lazuli.

[2] Sinope, Diez, s. v. [3] *Byzantium*.

like Sir Tryamour in the romance,[1] engaged his father unwittingly at Gerberoy (1079); William Rufus, when unhorsed in a skirmish, disarmed his enemies by the terror of his countenance and royal demeanour; Henry III was mistaken and nearly killed at Lewes; the Unknown Knight is a common figure at tournaments, and disguises were among the favourite caprices of knights who wished, like Sir Lancelot, to win glory by valour and skill without using the prestige of their names. Before movable visors were invented, by means of which the knight could hide or show his features at pleasure, the 'pot' or tilting helmet, shaped like a sugar loaf or cylinder, entirely covered the head; and when this was not worn, the *camail-de-fer*,[2] or the steel morion, worn above it with or without the *nasal*, or nose-bar, only showed part of the face. When every captain appeared in his own colours and flew a pennon or banner of his own arms, the fortunes of the field could more easily be discerned.

Once accepted as a sign of nobility, heraldic emblems were jealously guarded from all pretenders. The rapid development of the rules of heraldry was natural in an age in which everything was reduced to system; law, theology, philosophy, natural science, alchemy, the gay science, poetry, architecture. There never was a time in the history of the world when invention was more fertile, sudden and daring, and at the same time more willing to prescribe laws to itself, than the thirteenth century. But the steps by which this

[1] Sir Tryamour went disguised into the tournament, and met his father by misadventure:—

'He gaf hys fadur soche a clowte
That hors and man felle downe without dowte.'
Sir Tryamour (Percy Society).

[2] *camail* = *cap-mail*, head-mail; *mail* = Fr. *maille*, L. *macula*.

BATTLE (13TH CENT).—Nero D 1, *f* 3 b.

CHAMPIONS FIGHTING.—Reg. 10 E iv., *f* 313.

[*Face page 168.*

development proceeded, and the heralds who were the legislators of the new science are unknown to history. The science of heraldry, like Gothic architecture, seems to have sprung into full development almost without preparation or growth.

Heraldry was one of the prime glories of chivalry, in which pride of birth was one of the most important factors. To heraldry belongs the *cri de guerre* or *cri d'armes*, to which retainers of a great noble, one who had 'bannière dans l'armée' rallied as they followed his pennon and wore his colours.[1] The *cri d'armes* was sometimes embroidered on a banner; as, *e.g.*, 'ou nom Des' ('au nom de Dieu') on that of Joan of Arc. 'Ha Beauséant' was the cry of the Templars; 'Montjoye[2] St. Denys,' of the kings of France; 'Montjoye Anjou,' 'Montjoye St. Andrieu,' 'Montjoye au blanc épervier,' of the princes of France; 'St. George for England,' 'St. George Guienne,' 'Normandie,'[3] 'Notre Dame Guesclin,' and many others might be instanced. It was among the privileges of Knights Bannerets 'crier les enseignes;'[4] and the same usage held in the tourney also.

There is no province of history in which particular stories are more untrustworthy, than in that of heraldry and family tradition. The Peerages and Family Histories are full of baseless anecdotes recounted by willing believers; but they tell one tale of arms, crests, badges, and augmentations of

[1] Ducange, *Dissert. XII.*

[2] *Montjoye* was the name of Charlemagne's sword, *Gaudiosa*, his lance; *Durindana* the sword of Roland; *Excalibur* the sword of Arthur, *Ron*, his lance; *Tisona* and *Bayona* the Cid's swords.

[3] Robert of Normandy (1110).

[4] Favyn, *Théâtre d'honneur*, i. 24.

honour adopted or granted as memorials of deeds of prowess; and the great number of these is sufficient evidence of the value attributed to armory in the times of chivalry. The houses of Scrope and Grosvenor brought their contest for the bend *or* to a legal decision before the Earl Marshal's court.[1] Sir John Chandos (c. 1350) challenged a French lord who bore the same arms as himself, *argent* a pile *gules*.[2] When King John of France was vanquished at Poictiers, and was in danger of his life from the mob of knights and squires who were quarrelling for the honour of taking him prisoner, the Black Prince sent Sir Denys de Morbecq to bring him off safely, and in the evening after the battle adjudged the honour to two English lords, la Warr and Pelham, granting to the one the king's sword and, as an augmentation to his crest, the 'crampet' or 'chape' of the sheath; to the other his belt, with an augmentation of two belts and their buckles, borne quarterly with the three pelicans which were his family coat. The Pelhams also used a caged bird as a badge, and the la Warrs a crampet and the letter r (for *roy*) in memory of the same deed of arms.

In later times the minutiæ of heraldry were subject to strict rules. Special marks of cadency are appropriated to each of the sons—the label, the mullet, the martlet, etc.; alliance with heiresses is recorded by escutcheons of pretence, quartering and marshalling of coats; or different

[1] Other instances are: Harding and St. Loe (1312), Warburton and Gorges (1321), Sitsilt (Cecil) and Faknaham (Fakenham) (1353). *Dallaway*, p. 79.

[2] In French *pal aiguisé*, or *pal fiché* (Du Guesclin, *Petitot*, iv. p. 411). The banner is also described as a figure of *une bleue dame, ouvrée d'une orlure au ray de soleil.*

branches of a noble house bear the same arms with some distinguishing mark. Instances of these may be seen in all heraldry books; such are Clifford, Beauchamp, Nevile, Cobham, Berkeley. Sometimes it is the addition of a bordure, a bend, or a fess to the ancient coat; or the substitution of one charge for another, as annulets or martlets for crosslets; or an alteration of colour. Richard de Vernon (1195) bears a saltire: this is differenced with a chevron by Richard his son; later, it becomes a fret. Alençon bears three fleur-de-lys with a bordure; and so Burgundy, Lorraine, and other royal houses. The same may be seen in many Scottish coats, differenced by the lion rampant, or the tressure flory of Scotland, the fess chequy of Stewart, the mullets of Moray, etc. Allied families adopted part of each other's arms; a practice which was systematised afterwards by the rules of quartering and marshalling. A knight might assume the arms of an enemy vanquished in battle, if of superior condition to his own; or even, with consent, those of a friend, with a 'difference.' The Lady of Luxemburg, in the Romance of Partenay, asks her knight to bear the arms of Luxemburg, and no others. He says he must bear a lion in his shield. 'Then,' says she, 'put away the *azure*—so shall you bear my whole arms, both your arms and these same only.' Edward I granted Joinville to bear the arms of England. Manners, Berners, and other noble houses, and many royal towns and colleges, bear part of the royal arms. Heiresses gave arms to their husbands; knights to their squires, as Sir John Chandos. Spelman points out the local character of many coats of arms, instancing

the prevalence of garbs (wheatsheaves) in Cheshire, as in the Grosvenor arms, and in Norfolk, a field chequy, the coat of Warrenne. This would indicate that vassals of the great lords assumed some portion of their arms.

'Arms of pretension' are those which are taken as the symbol of a claim to family honours, or to a title and the rights territorial and otherwise which belong to it. The assumption of the arms of France by Edward III, of the arms of England by Mary Queen of Scots, and of Jerusalem by the House of Savoy are notable examples of such pretension. The Bourgignons in the civil war of the fifteenth century assumed a saltire or cross of St. Andrew with a fleur de lys. Among the treasons attributed to the Earl of Surrey in 1546 was included the charge that, having the right to bear the arms of England in the second quarter of his shield, he had assumed the quartering which was peculiar to the heir apparent.

Grants and assumptions of arms might or might not be certified to and confirmed by the Earl Marshal and his subordinates, at least in early times, when chivalry was a living force, not merely a thing of rules and ordinances. Guillim[1] and other writers give many instances of arms granted by lords and gentlemen, and borne and used without heralds' authority. There is sufficient evidence that in the earliest time more freedom of personal choice was exercised than later, when the most minute points had been regulated by heralds and kings-at-arms. Heraldry is a matter of personal fancy in 1150; it is full-blown in 1200 or 1250; a century later it was over-grown with detail and subjected

Display of Heraldry (Introduction). Spelman *Aspilogia* p. 48. Froissart.

to royal authority, and had lost all power of initiation. It appears to be established that by the ancient usage of armory any gentleman might assume what arms he pleased, subject to the condition that they were not already used by some one else, and to the wager of battle or award of the Marshal's court. Nicolas Upton, a canon of Salisbury, writing about the middle of the fifteenth century, lays it down that arms assumed *propria auctoritate* are as valid as those granted by heralds.[1] The *Book of St. Alban's* (1450) says that any gentleman may take and use arms lawfully, if not borne by any other man. Richard II defined by Act of Parliament (1389-90) the powers and jurisdiction of the court of the Constable and Marshal, as having cognisance of 'things that touch war within the realm, which cannot be determined nor discussed at Common Law, with other usages and customs to the same belonging': 'usages and customs appears to be taken to include all matters of heraldry, visitations of coat armour, grants of arms, and the settlement of all disputes on such matters.[3] But the Statute gives no new powers to the Earl Marshal, and takes away no rights from the subject; and in the commission to the heralds to enquire into arms issued by Henry V in 1419[2] it is stated that arms may be borne

[1] *Illa arma non sunt majoris auctoritatis quam illa quæ auctoritate propria sunt assumpta;* alluding (temp. Hen. iv.) to arms assumed by poor men who had been enriched by the wars of Edward III. Upton, B. I., c. xix., citing John of Guildford. Johannes de Bado (=Vado), Aureo, Gilt-ford]. Nicolas Upton (temp. Henry VI), Canon of Basingstoke.

[2] Dallaway, p. 124.

[3] In 1339 the Earl Marshal decided a suit between Maltby and Beckwith as 'due coat armour to him lineally descended,' *i.e.*, not by grant, but by use (Dallaway); and Richard II granted to Thomas, Earl of Nottingham, a difference in a crest which he wore by *justum titulum hereditarium.*

by grant or by ancestry, *jure antecessoris.*[3] The heralds met as a College first in 1420, and drew up regulations for their own guidance; but it is obvious that these regulations cannot define the powers of the college, nor give it any authority superior to its own constitution; and the same may be said of the act of incorporation of the college by Richard III, 1st March, 1484-5.[1] The claim of the College of Arms, that no heraldry exists but by its licence, is founded neither in history nor in law, and cannot be maintained. The most that can be claimed for it is that the Kings-at-arms were required by royal command to call upon all persons using coat-armour to justify their bearing the same before the court, on pain of having them disallowed.

We have traced the growth of heraldry from its first beginnings in the earlier times of chivalry, till its appearance in the thirteenth century full grown. We have no space to do more than touch upon its later additions and complications, its infinite array of the rules of quartering, impaling, cadency, and marshalling; its laws of precedence, succession and difference; its innumerable menagerie of beasts,

[1] Edward IV. (1482) gives to persons exècuting the office of High Constable to try and punish in all causes, even capital, which fall under the jurisdiction of the Constable '*de jure sive de consuetudine*, without appeal, as in the time of Edward I. Similar enactments or ordinances were issued by Richard III; and one by Edward IV (1467) is noted '*auctoritate* Parliamenti.' The power, legal and assumed, of the High Constable became in later times so dangerous from its liability to abuse, that no High Constable was appointed after the execution of Humphrey Stafford, Duke of Buckingham (1521), as it was thought unwise to commit so much power to a single subject. It has been doubted whether the Earl Marshal has any power to hold a court in the abeyance of the office of the High Constable. It is, however, improbable that any coats lawfully borne escaped the heralds' visitations; and it would be irregular now-a-days to assume arms *jure anticessoris* without confirmation or grant.

birds and fishes, real and fabulous, wyverns, griffins, tygers, cockatrices, salamanders, lions couchant, sejant, rampant, combatant, passant, guardant and reguardant, its crosses pattée, moline, flory, boutonnée, its roundels, mascles, rustres, fers-de-moulin, water-bougets, mullets, estoiles; its pales, fesses, chevrons, chiefs, cantons, gyrons, and a thousand other charges and 'ordinaries,' dear to Guillims and Dugdales,' paste-board Norroys' and Dryas dusts. We do not know how and when all these were invented: but many brains must have been busy at the work. All these things preserve a dim reflection of their ancient glory. We still pay a guinea for the right to have a crest on our spoons, and two guineas if we ornament the panels of our carriages with such gewgaws, but heraldry is no longer looked upon as a serious 'science.' It is interesting and useful as a historical study, and affords legitimate pleasure, like the possession of an ancient house or an ancient name, to those who like to remember their ancestors. Augmentations of honour are still granted by royal authority and justly valued; but the mere wearing of arms is open by common sufference to any one who chooses to pay for the honour, or assume it without paying. The tax-gatherer, not the College of Arms, is the judge. In ancient times the usurper of arms not his own had his shield reversed and his spurs cut off, and might be fined and imprisoned[1] by the Earl Marshal's

[1] Although the powers of the Lord High Constable and Earl Marshal extend only to matters which cannot be treated by the Courts of Common Law, yet a large discretion was assumed and granted under the royal prerogative. Edward IV by letters patent (Spelman, *s. v. Constabularius*) granted (1468) to the Lord High Constable power to fine and otherwise punish in all cases which came within his jurisdiction since the time of William the Conqueror, and similar powers in almost identical language were granted by Richard III and Henry VI

Court. The last instance of the chivalric degradation of a knight is perhaps the taking down and dragging in the dust of Lord Dundonald's banner in Henry VII's chapel. In the Middle Ages heraldry was a spur to honour as well as a badge of pride, and must be regarded as a powerful motive for good and evil, fostering pride of birth and the exclusiveness of rank, and making the fame of ancestors a substitute for the virtues which made them famous; but also keeping up a high sense of the duty attaching to gentle birth.

It was not chivalrous of Henry in Richmond at Bosworth Field and Charles VIII at Fornoue to dress a number of knights in their own coats and enter the battle disguised; but to the knights themselves the dangerous service was of the true nature of chivalry, and made them in their own fancy brothers in arms of the king. The knight who wore his lady's favour on his helmet had besides his knightly duty a special incitement to enhance it. The Bruce's heart was a talisman of valour in the Spanish crusade.[1] The crosses worn by Templars and Hospitallers were no

[1] Tales of a Grandfather.

Blackstone denies the right to fine or imprison, the Court of Chivalry not being a Court of Record. There are many such anomalies in English history and English law. The powers of the court of Chivalry were always limited to matters of war and honour. The actual exercise of them depended on the effectiveness of the royal power, the state of the kingdom, public opinion, the power or weakness of parliament and the judicature: and no description of them can be complete which does not take into account the varying circumstances of the time. The question may perhaps be raised what was the effect of the annulling of Richard III's acts by Henry VII; and of the resolution of the House of Commons in 1628, that the Marshal's Court or *Curia militaris* cannot lawfully meet without the concurrence of the High Constable: no High Constable having been appointed since.

mere ornaments, but emblems of their most sacred duty. Even the swan, the peacock, the 'red sleeve bordered with pearls,' and such like childish devices, were realities to those who wore them, signs of 'hault courage' and the inspirers of desperate valour. All the foolhardy conflicts of which Froissart's pages are full had a close connection with heraldry. Honours won in war could be displayed at tournaments and royal feasts, and ladies' favour was freely granted to those who had received some trifling decoration from the Prince under whom they had fought. It was all part of the same noble game, a game the honours of which were reserved for those of gentle blood, but worthy of the adventurous youth of high-minded nations.

As chivalry lost freshness and vitality, and became at length little more than a matter of ceremony, so heraldry became merely pictorial. Heralds disputed with each other upon points of nomenclature: whether two lions standing on their hind-legs opposite to each other should be termed 'rampant combatant,' or merely 'combatant'; whether a lion with his face turned to the spectator is justly termed 'lion passant guardant,' 'lion leopardé,' or 'leopard'; whether the coat armour of Campbell should be blazoned 'gyrony *or* and *sable* (or *sable* and *or*),' or 'coupé taillé parti tranché *or* and *sable*'; what should be the several perquisites and fees of kings-at-arms, heralds, squires, deans, canons, and attendants of all degrees at the installation of a Knight of the Garter; and other niceties incredibly unimportant. It may be doubted whether empty labour has ever proceeded to such extremes of inanity and affectation as in the books of Gerard Leigh, Guillim, and Vulson de la Colombière.

The only absurdity which can compare with it is the court-language of sham chivalry, and the euphuism fashionable at the court of Elizabeth, which belong to the same epoch.

Heraldry, which was at any rate decorative and beautiful in its prime, has now been degraded by the bad taste of a long succession of heralds into the grotesque travesty to be seen in book-plates and illustrated peerages, of which perhaps the lowest forms are those of the modern banners and stall-plates in St. George's Chapel at Windsor, and the blazoning of pedigrees issued by the College of Arms. So much attention has been given in the last fifty years to the revival of mediæval forms, that we may regret the inattention of heralds and pursuivants to their proper business, and express a hope that the College of Arms may, at no distant date, take counsel of antiquaries, and restore the science of armoury to something like its ancient seemliness and dignity.

CHAPTER VIII

Ceremony

Symbolism and authority—Verification and definition of rights—Legality—Rules and customs in Church, chivalry, etc.—Knighthood an allegory of the Christian life—Court ceremony—Display and magnificence—Degrees of rank—Personal service the bond of society in the Middle Ages—Ideals of chivalry—Mediæval households—Marshal, Seneschal, Chamberlain, etc.—Ceremonial of knighthood—Vows—Vivid expression of feeling—Symbolical action and pictorial representation of ideas.

The habit of mind which saw symbols and sacraments everywhere, combined with the habit of looking for authority and regulation in everything, gives a reason for the importance assigned to ceremony in the Middle Ages. Where every detail had an inward meaning, and was prescribed by authority, it was dangerous to make outward alterations which might disturb the sequence of the spiritual meaning. As a sacrament might fail in effect if the ceremonial details were not duly performed, so an act of homage, an oath, or the transfer of a fief might be rendered invalid by omission or mistake in some point of the complete ceremonial, ordained and therefore sacred. No quality of the mediæval mind is more worthy of study than its respect for words and names, definitions and regulations, because they were looked upon as the vesture of realities. The disputes between Gregory VII and William I, William Rufus and Anselm, Henry II and Becket, proceeded from a desire common to

both parties to settle the grounds of dissension in a law recognised by both; they were not merely a struggle between Church and State. Homage and Investiture were more than party words; they stood for principles. Generally speaking (as Bishop Stubbs puts it)[1] law or right is the chief aim of mediæval action. Edward I seems to us to be harsh and lawyer-like in his dealings with Scotland, Wales, the clergy and the barons, and to strain legality beyond the limits of generosity. If so, it is quite in character. The legal temper defines its rights before it gives them away or bargains for them, and calls upon rivals and disturbers of what is settled to define theirs also. Generosity itself was reduced to a system. A knight was bound by rule to give so much largess on this or that occasion; he might grant his life to a vanquished champion, or take it, according to rule; he estimated the tariff of ransom by rule; according to rule, he might obey or make war upon his liege lord.[2] The rule of honour was as punctilious and minute as the Use of Sarum, and for a like reason; that what was ordained was not lightly ordained, but had a serious meaning and was meant to be obeyed. Ceremonies in our day tend to be unreal, whether they are perfunctory, as in proceedings before a judge, or showy, as in the theatrical pageants which archæology tries to revive. It is only now and then, as in a Jubilee celebration, where the unity of an Empire is symbolised in a single person, that the reality justifies the show, and wakes up the mediæval spirit. It matters little now a days whether or not a king is crowned and anointed.

[1] *Lectures.*

[2] So Fulk Fitz Warin defied (the word *diffidare* is feudal) King John; 'pur quoi je vus rends vos homages.'

Six hundred years ago, it made the difference of his holding, or not holding, God's authority for his place. An oath in a court of justice is now little more than a conventional prelude to giving evidence: in the middle ages an oath was a tremendous reality: and if men of honour broke oaths, it was because they believed as much in the power of the Church to remit and absolve as in her power to impose penalties.

The symbolical character of chivalric institutions is of course admitted by all; but it may easily be forgotten that the knights themselves lived as in an allegory, and that what seems fantastic and far-fetched to us was not so to them, but entered naturally into the circumstances of their life. Knighthood was a discipline never relaxed through life, the object of which was to make the knight at once complete and free in himself, and obedient to the rules of knightly conduct. No detail of such a life could be unimportant; and Don Quixote's search for precedents of conduct in every adventure is a satire only because the knight-errant of the thirteenth century would have needed no precedents, but would have known from the teaching of daily obedience what knightly duty demanded of him, as naturally as a 'gentleman' of modern times knows the rules of honour.

We laugh at the extravagance of Spanish or Prussian court etiquette, and remember Carlyle's grotesque wish that at some great function the clothes would fly off from all the personages and show what poor creatures men are when stripped of ceremony. But though ceremony grown stale is tedious and meaningless, it has its origin in natural dignity. That loftiness of demeanour, which was called *parage*, and was part of the true knightly character, distin-

guished from pride[1] as clearly as admiration is distinguished from envy, was inseparable from ceremony. The mediæval mind had no civic notions of equality: as the heavenly powers, the saints in glory, the celestial spheres, the blessed souls in purgatory, and even the accursed in hell, were all arranged in hierarchies, so all creatures upon earth were set in due order and subjection, the lower to the higher. The hierarchy of the nobility stood by divine appointment as the counterpart to that of the clergy; and to derogate from it would be to resist God's ordinance.[2] For a man to rise above his condition was as unnatural as to fall below it. High place and noble blood were talents to be used, not made light of. There were degrees even of kingliness. The Emperor claimed universal precedence. The king of France was 'le plus grand roy des Chrestiens' (Joinville). The titles of France were placed in the first quarter of the arms of England, the lions of England only in the second. Philip, son of John the Good, seeing a page serve the king of England before his father, struck him and said, 'Do you not know that the king of France takes precedence of all kings?' and was answered, 'Vous êtes hardy'; whence his name 'Philippe le hardi.' Yet the English kings before the Conquest had styled themselves βασιλεύς; a title denied by Anna Commena to the French or Frankish king of the day, whom she styles ῥῆγες, and does not acknowledge as βασιλεῖς. Every man on the earth, except the king, was the

[1] *Inter graviora peccata primum est superbia, sicut causa per quam alia peccata aggravantur. Summa Theologiæ*, ii. 2. 162. 7 (Butler, *Purgatory*, p. 145) and the first sin of Adam was determined by the ame authority to have been not disobedience but pride—*eritis sicut Deus, scientes bonum* et *malum*.

[2] *Barbazon* i. 59.

'man' of some liege lord; and it was just and fitting that degrees of place should have their outward expression in distinctive place, crowns and robes, banners, heraldic achievements, order of processions, and stately methods of obeisance and speech. It is a misreading of the times, if we see servility in Joinville's and Froissart's admiring descriptions of the splendour of the princes and lords among whom their lives were passed, or arrogance in Edward III's punctilious challenge of the crown of France.

A boy of knightly birth was reared in ceremony. From his earliest childhood he learnt to look upon himself and his equals as of a different degree and almost of a different nature from his fellow creatures who were not of gentle condition. Heraldic pride and the distinction of degree were among his first impressions: and when he went to be page at the castle of a lord or the palace of a Bishop or Abbot, his daily life was regulated by degree and precedence. The puerilities of ceremony which are incidental to such a training were worth what they cost; and as they were accepted in good faith and not looked upon as puerile, they did not create a theatrical or insincere habit of mind.

The heir of the greatest house in France or England might discharge menial offices about his lord's stable and bed-chamber without derogation from pride of place; and thus learning as groom, valet, and table-servant the practical details of daily service, which were to be rendered to himself when he had passed through the degrees of page and squire and become a knight, the universal obligation of precedence and etiquette became to him as much a matter

of course as the relation of knight to squire and squire to page. The notion of due order and seemly state was inseparable from that of service, and had its value when speech and action were less under the control of rules of breeding than in our more conventional society; and this goes far to excuse the defects and excesses of both.

The household of a feudal lord was organised in the same manner as the court of a sovereign prince. The tradition of service at the Emperor's court was symbolically represented by the seven Electors; the Archbishops of Mentz, Treves and Cologne, and the Dukes of the four nations, Franks, Swabians, Saxons and Bavarians,[1] who bore severally the offices of Chancellors of the three kingdoms,[2] Cupbearer (*pincerna*), Master of the meats (*dapifer* or *seneschallus*), Marshal or Master of the horse (*mareschallus*), and Chamberlain (*camerarius*).

The imperial court of the king of the Franks became the model of other courts, and offices, all originally involving personal service, were multiplied. Every seigneur had his chaplains, chamberlain, steward, squires to carve, and squires at the table, squires of the body, cupbearer, seneschal, marshal, falconer, huntsman, with their substitutes and subordinates; and to each of these was assigned

[1] The functions of the seven Electors were finally arranged as by the following lines:—

Moguntinensis, Trevirensis, Coloniensis,[1]
quilibet Imperii fit Cancellarius horum:
et[2] Palatinus Dapifer, Dux[3] Portitor ensis,
Marchio[4] Præpositus cameræ, Pincerna Boemus.[5]

[2] Bruce, *Holy R. Empire*, Chap. xiv.

[1] Mentz, Treves, Cologne.
[2] Palatinate. [3] Saxony. [4] Brandenburg. [5] Bohemia.

SQUIRES ARMING A KNIGHT.—Harl. 4431, *f* 114.

KNIGHT MOUNTING.—Harl. 4431, *f* 137.

[*Face page 185.*

his own place and precedence, and the duty and the rights pertaining to his place.

The ceremonies attending the giving of knighthood have often been described: everything was symbolical, actions, arms, and dress. Knighthood was considered to be the sister of Holy Orders. Some carried the analogy so far as to deem celibacy part of a knight's *devoir*. The perfect knight, like the Companions of the Temple and St. John, should abstain from marriage; though the obligations and rights of love were common (strange as it may seem) to knights and clerks:—

> Et quand venra à ami faire,
> et amez un biau clerc debonnere
> qui soit vaillant, preux, et courtois,
> ou un biau chevalier ancois:
> qu'en chevalier et en clergie
> est tres-toute la cortoisie. [1]

Chastity, in any case, was one of the knightly virtues; though the practice of knighthood fell here far short of its ideal.

The ancient ceremonial of dubbing a knight was simple. Geoffrey Plantagenet (1129), with twenty-five companions who were to be knighted also, was vested in white and red, armed with a hauberk and *chausses de mailles:* a shield with golden lions was hung about his neck, a helmet set with jewels put upon his head, and lance and sword in his hand. He vaults upon his horse without aid of stirrups or *sautoir* [2], and enters the forests. So the Monk of Marmoutier. The chanson de geste, *Godefroy de Bouillon*,

[1] Ducange s. v. *Miles*.

[2] A kind of mounting-ladder in the shape of the letter X, the heraldic *saltire*.

describes the same scene, but with more embellishment of jewellery and upholstery.

The delivery of the sword is the principal act of initiation. A little later comes in that part of the ceremony which alone survives, the *accolade* or *colée*, whether given with the flat of the sword or with the hand. Sometimes, in the rough play of simple times, it is a blow so heavy that the young knight declares he would have borne it from no one else.

When knighthood had come to its prime, the symbolism which accompanied it became more elaborate and conscious. The novice was solemnly stripped of his clothes by his fellow squires and put into a bath, the symbol of purification; he was then conducted to his bed, and on rising from it was clothed in a white robe, the emblem of purity (the 'chrisom' of candidates for baptism), and a scarlet doublet, the emblem of nobility. The night before his admission to the Order, in imitation of the vigil of catechumens on Whitsun Eve, he kept the *veillée des armes* in church, fully armed and alone, or in company with the priest and his sponsors: then confessed and received absolution, heard mass and took the sacrament. He then presented his sword to the priest, who laid it on the altar, blessed and returned it. Next, the novice, after kneeling at the feet of the lady who was to arm him, gave his sword to his patron knight (*adoubeur*) to whom he now made his knightly vow. He was then invested by squires and ladies with hauberk, *chausses*, *brassards*, gauntlets, spurs, and the rest of his armour, and lastly with the sword and sword-belt. Then kneeling before his patron he received the *accolade*, three strokes with the flat of the sword on the shoulder or neck

and the *soufflet*[1] or *colée* (alapa), a light blow on the cheek, accompanied by the words: 'Au nom de Dieu, de St. Michel, et de St. George, je te fais chevalier: sois preux, hardi, et loyal.' Then followed *largesse*,[2] both to the new knight from his patron, and from himself to his companions and inferiors, in token of the noble liberality which was one of the first knightly virtues. For 'largess and courtesy (it was said) are the two wings of chivalry.'

The white robe and the bath were taken to represent baptism; the *accolade* and the *soufflet*, confirmation; the word *espouser*, used as an equivalent of *adouber*, holy Matrimony.[3]

A somewhat different interpretation of the ceremonies attending knighthood is given in a romance of the thirteenth century, called *l'Ordene de la Chevalerie*, purporting to be written by Hugh de Tabarie, a prince of Galilee, in the time of Saladin. The bath signifies cleansing from sin; the bed on which the novice is laid, repose in Paradise; the white sheets, chastity. The red robe which he puts on denotes that he will shed his blood in defence of Holy Church; the shoes, brown or black (*cauchemente noire*), the earth, in which we shall all lie, for pride is unbecoming in a knight; the white girdle, a clean life; the spurs, ready service; the two edges of the sword, self-defence and succour to the weak; the white coif, a pure heart.

The origin of these ceremonies is obscure. Probably the girding on of the sword and the receiving of the novice into the ranks of complete warriors are primæval; and the

[1] The *soufflet*, say the ballads, was omitted in the case of the Cid. Perhaps a Little John's buffet might have followed it. *Accolade* and *colée* are often used as synonymous.

[2] *Ste. Palaye* ii., Note 12.

[3] *Barbazon* i. 59.

development of the details is part of the growth of ceremony and symbolism which, as we have already pointed out, is a mark of the crusading age.

One of the noble extravagances of chivalry took the form of vows. Originally a vow is the offering of some precious thing to gain the favour of deity and obtain a favour. Jephthah's vow, the vow of Agamemnon, the 'Sacred Spring' of the Romans, are instances of this. The vow of chivalry was a mode of calling God and the Saints to witness a resolve, and in so conspicuous a manner as to draw the attention of men. Knights vowed that they would not cut their hair, or change their clothes, or sleep in a bed, or eat meat, or drink wine, till they had achieved some particular exploit.

Edward I of England, sitting in state in Westminster Hall, caused two live swans with gold chains about their necks to be brought into the hall, and laying his hands on them swore with all his court 'before God, Our Lady and the Swans,' that he would be avenged of the Scots. Sir Walter Manny (1339) vowed before God and the Heron that he would be the first to set foot on the soil of France; and Sir James Audley (1346) that he would be first in the field and the best knight, or die. Joinville (1250) tells of a knight who for some private quarrel had sworn that he would not wear his hair cut after the knightly fashion, but long and parted down the middle as women do, till he were avenged. When his enemy was disgraced he came and sat down on a bench in the hall, before the King and his lords, and had his hair cut. Jocelin de Courtenay, prince of Edessa (1123), took a vow not to change his clothes, eat

flesh or drink wine, except at Mass,[1] till he should be relieved of a charge imposed upon him by Baldwin II, King of Jerusalem. Jehan de Saintré rode for three years with four knights and squires, with helmets chained to their left shoulders, till they should have accomplished their vow to defy with sword and lance a like number of knights and squires for the beauty of their mistresses. We may compare with this the extravagance of Pierre Vidal the troubadour, who, when Raymond of Toulouse died, let his hair, beard, and nails grow, and cropped the ears and tails of his horses.

The commonest vow, one which combined religion with adventure, and assured the soldier of salvation on condition of following the sport which he loved best, was that of going on crusade to the Holy Places, or against the Moors in Spain, or the heathen on the German border. The vow was often taken lightly, but was sometimes a true sacrifice. Joinville, whose devotion to his master cannot be gainsaid, refused to go with him on his second Crusade. 'He had served God and the King beyond sea, . . . and now if he wished to do what was pleasing to God, he should remain at home and defend his people against those who oppressed and impoverished them.' Blacas, the troubadour, knowing something of the woes of the crusaders, refused when urged to take the cross :—

> Je ferai ma pénitence
> entre mer et Durance,
> auprès de mon manoir.

Others thought to get the merits of pilgrimage by paying for a grave in the holy earth of the Campo Santo at Pisa, whence the Pisans made good profit; for all vows were a

[1] The cup was not denied to the laity till late in the twelfth century.

bargain, and might be interpreted literally; or by dying in the habit of a pilgrim or a monk.[1]

Such vows are in part produced by the same spirit of sacrifice or self-mortification which is seen in the self-imposed rigours of saints; a sense that no sacrifice can be equal to the debt owed by the soul that is saved; they bear witness to an intensity of feeling, the expression of which cannot but be extravagant; they speak also of a pride of personal worth which, if half-savage, is also dignified; they may be compared with the violent gestures—for gesture too is symbolical—which often accompanied strong emotion in those days, and was not thought unseemly. The tremendous defiance of Henry II—'God, I will take from thee that part of me thou lovest best, my soul!'—the furious gestures of Becket's murderers;[2] the transports of rage to which Henry II and his son John gave way, and which they themselves ascribed to the infusion of devil's blood in their race; the savage outrages committed upon the body of Simon de Montfort, and the no less savage retaliation made by his sons upon Henry of Almaine in the church at Viterbo; the outbursts of fury which stain the lives of the Cid, the Douglas, Edward I, Robert Bruce; and on the other hand the exaggerated parables by which St. Francis put his precepts into action, and the refusal of Cœur de Lion to look upon Jerusalem, since he had not been able to save it from the infidels—all these and many more instances of violent and (as we should call it)

[1] Milton, *Par. Lost*, iii. 480. 'Or in Franciscan think to pass disguised.' So Raymond of Toulouse (1221) took the habit of the Hospital *in articulo mortis*.

[2] See Stanley, *Memorials of Canterbury*, p. 79.

theatrical exaggeration are marks of a state of civilization in which passions were more keenly felt and more dramatically expressed than in our cooler age. Our emotions, like our customs, tend to a level of similarity. Symbolical action was natural then (as in the times of the Hebrew prophets), because life was more pictorial, more vivid and brightly coloured. The public joy which attended the procession of Cimabue's picture through the streets of Florence gave its name to the Borgo Allegro; and Boccaccio tells how it was the custom for the maidens of Florence to dance and sing crowned with roses in the open spaces of his city. No expenditure was grudged which could beautify with sculpture or adorn with vivid imagery of fresco, mosaic, and glass, the walls and windows of churches. Henry III more truly expressed the true mediæval feeling, when he built Westminster Abbey and brought in Italian craftsmen to decorate his chambers at Windsor and St. Stephen's, than the grim barons who grudged his lavish outlay and bade him 'live of his own.' We must figure to ourselves a state of society which was not ashamed of the joy of living, and loved all the outward signs of joy: so that life without such signs would be, as it were, silence instead of speech. Ceremony was a language, not an artificial convention, however it may have been travestied in later times by heralds, masters of ceremonies, and sacristans.

Ceremony reached its height in England under the 'New Monarchy' of York and Tudor. The queen of Edward IV dined alone, whilst her mother and sisters and the lords of the court waited for hours on their knees. How different from the time when St. Hugh of Lincoln pushed in among

the courtiers and sat down by the side of Henry II, or when St. Lewis did justice under the oak at Vincennes. Kings gained no honour by being thus uplifted above their subjects; and ceremony grew stale when it was prescribed, and became a thing of rules, instead of a natural homage to superior rank and a dutiful acknowledgment of the command to render honour where honour is due.

At banquets, weddings, coronations, funerals, and above all at tournaments, similar pomp and state was observed. All was ordained and punctually carried out by heralds and pursuivants, who arranged the precedence of the guests, and marshalled the processions companying the principal personages, marked out the lists, received the champions and inquired into their claims, examined their arms, judged knightly or unknightly conduct, and proclaimed the victors. The regulations of all ceremonies were prescribed with the greatest minuteness, and the elaboration of details carried into what would appear to us as a childish excess, if we did not bear in mind that symbolism and authority had in ancient days a value which we find it difficult to estimate.

We have laid stress upon the importance of chivalric ceremony at this time, because ceremony was in the first place the only way of representing to an unlearned age, whose chief education was through the eyes, the value of that which it represented; and, secondly, because the society of the Middle Ages can only be understood—so far as any society of remote times can be understood—through its own expression of its convictions; and state and ceremony were the natural expression of the dignity of knighthood. We are not justified in setting down heraldry, ritual and

stately ceremonial, as mere trappings of state, because they have lost meaning to us. They were part of the life of the ages which built the cathedrals, and instituted the Orders of the Temple and St. John, of St. Francis and St. Dominic; and the same ages produced Magna Charta, the legislation of Edward I, the *Summa* of Thomas Aquinas, and the *Divine Comedy*.

CHAPTER IX

Literature

Literature and manners—the Church—the Feudal system—Learning confined to a few—Chronicles—Mediæval poetry a literature of chivalry—Chaucer—Monotony of poetic convention—Cycles of epic and romantic poetry—Provençal—Arabian—Democratic element—Equality in Knighthood and Love—Langue d'oc and langue d'oil—French ascendency—Norman and Celtic, Teutonic, &c. elements in the French romance—*Chansons de geste* Frankish in origin, French (Romance) in language—Origin of the French language—Eastern Franks (Riparian) retain the German speech—French and German nations—Chansons de geste deal with historical personages, German epics with mythological—Other cycles—*E' popée courtoise*—*Romans*—Welsh—Breton legends—purity of this literature. Doctrine of love *par amours*. *Fabliaux*—Symbolism of romances—*Contes* and *nouvelles*—Chronicles and histories—Prose compositions, originating in Northern France, take the places of poems—Other elements—Celtic (Welsh, Breton, Gaelic)—German epics and romances—Rise of English literature.

If the manners of an age are reflected in the character of its literature, the literature also affects and moulds the manners of the time. To take one instance out of many; the Renaissance period, taking a starting point from Petrarch, is expressed in its double tendency to reproduce the forms of classical literature and art, and to emancipate itself from mediæval tradition, by the imitation of classical poetry, rhetoric and history, on the one hand, and on the other in a new birth of speculation, and a dramatic and romantic literature classical in form, but modern in subject and sentiment: and this literature in its turn helped to direct philosophical and historical speculation in a modern direction; whilst the free handling of social subjects, on the stage and in books intended to be read by all classes of society, democratized literature and set a common standard of social and moral conduct.

The most powerful social forces in the middle ages were, on one side the Church, rigid in doctrine, uniform in organization, dignified in ceremony, authoritative in discipline, claiming the entire control over thought and morals,

and proclaiming the equality of all men in the sight of God; and on the other, the feudal system in war and peace, setting a rule of conduct independent of and often antagonistic to that of the Church, and distinguishing classes by difference of birth expressed in military organization and tenure of land. Books were unknown to all but the clergy, and a few of the noble caste by which the world was governed.

Such works as those of Longland, Gower and Wiclif—to take instances from our own country—in which a democratic spirit breathes, lie aside from the beaten track, and rather foreshadow the outbreaks of popular discontent which accompanied the decay of a military and feudal régime resting upon a settled condition of commerce and agriculture, than speak the current language of the Middle Ages. Those works had to do with the realities of life, the hard rule of churchmen and nobles, and the needy estate of the poor.

If we except the monastic chronicles, which to some extent aimed at setting down things as they were, the popular literature of the chivalric period, no great body of writings, is made up of allegories, apocalypses or visions such as those of Adam de Ros or Longland, church hymns, metrical lives of Saints, mystery plays, popular ballads and stories, political satire and comic or licentious verse; the remainder, a far larger bulk, is principally in the form of Roman, Chanson de geste, or love-lyric, and deals with the actions of heroes and knights, in war, adventure, or tournament, and with their amours. The poetic literature of the Middle Ages is a literature of chivalry. Poetry took form under chivalric influences, and in its turn affected chivalry. The

common people had no share in this, except so far as they might be present when troubadours and trouvères sang or recited their poems in hall, in a language which, if not wholly unknown, was at least unfamiliar to Englishmen of all ranks below the noble or gentle caste. The native literature of England was in abeyance since the Conquest; or if Chaucer wrote in English for 'lordynges,' the influence of his poetry in moulding the language and the poetic temper of England belongs to a later time than his own. Though formed on French models, it is too real, human, and sensible to have much kinship with poets of the conventional French school, a school so conventional that it remained almost unchanged for four centuries. Chaucer 'makes an epoch and founds a tradition.'[1] Like Petrarch, Chaucer is a morning star of poets, and looks forward to the dayspring of the Renaissance. Dryden, who held him, as 'the father of English poetry,' 'in the same degree of veneration as the Grecians held Homer, or the Romans Virgil,' calls him 'a perpetual fountain of good sense'[2]; and indeed the Renaissance may be called the victory of sense over nonsense. It is not only that Chaucer differed from the French school in his general tone of mind: he found his true expression first after his visit to Italy, where he became acquainted with a literature which had all human life for its material, not a worn-out cycle of imaginary adventure. And so, though he writes of knights and ladies, he does not properly belong to the poetry of chivalry.

It is impossible within the limits of this chapter to do

[1] Matt. Arnold, Introduction to Ward's *English Poets*, p. 33.

[2] Introduction to *Translations*.

more than trace the outlines of the history of letters before the eleventh and twelfth century. We can only mention the principal sources which combined to form the stream of poetry that runs through the period. Once formed, by the middle of the twelfth century, the accepted conventional type varies but little. Allowing for the growth of language,[1] an English, German or French romance of the twelfth century hardly differs in sentiment, pictures of manners, and even detail from one of the fifteenth. There is a common stock of ideas and images and a similarity of style which are often tedious. The same cycles of epic and romantic poetry were current in all countries, and furnished models of chivalrous life to the knights and ladies for whom they were written. The gests of Arthur, Roland, Siegfried, Cæsar and Alexander are undistinguishable: time and space have nothing to do with the enterprises of the paladins; giants and enchanters are as common as knights errant and gentle or hard-hearted ladies. Chivalric romance is summed up in the *Orlando Furioso*; with this exception, that what was fairyland to Ariosto was real to the imagination of the Middle Ages.

That birth of new ideas in every branch of thought and action to which we have alluded above, and which marks the first development of the secular civilization of Europe out of Germanic barbarism, had as one of its characteristics a fusion of many national elements into a common convention. National differences exist, besides the main difference of language; but the type is constant and European, like

[1] Franz Hueffer (*Troubadours*, p. 8), points out that the Provençal language being 'the exclusive speech of an exclusive class,' shows little development in the course of four or five centuries.

the mediæval types of architecture and ritual with their divergences of national growth. It is hard to follow the process of fusion by which elements so various and discordant were combined in one. We must look for one model of sufficient strength and development to give its own form to the rest. As the Augustan poetry of Rome, the Elizabethan poetry of England, and that of the eighteenth century take their typical character, apart from the native influences by which they are coloured, from the several forms of Greek, Italian and French poetry; so in the eleventh and twelfth century, the dominant type, that is, the type of the most polished and reflective poetry, was that of Provence.

The troubadours of Provence were the founders of European poetry. Their own art of song and verse was derived from the Arabs, to whom it had come from Persia.[1] All the artifices of rhyme and rhythm had been exhausted by the Arabian poets of Spain, and their methods as well as their subjects and their style were adopted by the Provençals; and in the matter of form there was little to be added to it.

Arabian poetry spread throughout Christian Spain and through Provence: and a closer connection between Spain and Provence was established by the marriage of Raymond Berenger, Count of Barcelona, in 1112 to Dulcia heiress of Provence, which united the crowns of Catalonia and Provence.

Into the cistern of Provençal poetry flowed streams from

[1] The accentual verse of Latin church hymns may also have been one of the elements which produced Provençal poetry; but the resemblance with the Arabic rules of verse is too close to be accidental.

every quarter. Among the converging influences which helped to form it we may include that of the higher civilization of Byzantium, brought into light by the Crusades. Byzantine literature, being in an unknown language, did not affect the poetry of Europe: but the sight of so much luxury and ceremonial, the remains of an ancient civilization, as was exhibited to the western barbarians who visited Constantinople in the first and second Crusades could not but touch those of them who, like the Provençals, had already some social refinement. Ceremony had its home at the Eastern court, and was brought back thence into Western Europe. In Eastern Christendom, too, women enjoyed a higher position and had more deference paid to them than in the West, where a wife or a daughter was the property of her guardian, and the forms of Roman or barbaric law tempered the practice of Christian civilization.

The notion of equality in knighthood and love was in harmony with the democratic feeling of Provence. Wherever a country has been completely Romanized, there a sense of civic equality may generally be found. The *bourgeoisie* is not wholly despised. The South of France was always less feudal than the North. The knighthood of France and Germany belongs only to those who are nobly born. In the South the humblest born *jougleur*[1] may become a troubadour and a knight. Poetry made all poets equal, from princes like William Count of Poitou and Bertrand de Born to Bernard of Ventadour the baker's son, who was the lover of the Countess of Ventadour his lord's wife, and then of Eleanor Queen of France.

[1] The word is correctly spelt *jougleur*, not *jongleur*, and is derived from the Latin *ioculator*.

Something like this equality may be observed north of the Loire in the equality of knighthood.[1] The Knights of the Garter and the Golden Fleece, like the Knights of the Round Table, are all equal in chivalry, and bear the name of Companions: the King of France thinks he is receiving as well as conferring an honour when he is knighted by the Chevalier Bayard. The brotherhood of poets is like the brotherhood of knights. Without doubt the less feudal, scholastic, ecclesiastical Provence modified the stiffness of the French aristocracy: but as a general rule it would appear that chivalry in the south tended to equalize different classes, and in the north to keep the noble caste apart.

A feeling of equality in all that concerned love was maintained by the subjection of all questions of faithlessness in love to a Court of Love[2] presided over by noble ladies, which might censure lovers alike of high and low degree. That such courts were rather a plaything than a serious institution, like the Earl Marshal's Court of Honour in England, we may admit: but they must have supplied a corrective to irregular and unlicensed intercourse, and helped to set a conventional standard, which, however low, was higher than what preceded it.

Besides the workmanship of the poetic craft and the regulation of love by legislation, to the Provençals above all belongs that essential of the chivalrous spirit which they

[1] See *King Horn* (a poem of English origin, though re-translated from the French) who will not love the king's daughter because he is a thrall, till he is dubbed knight. 'Thanne is my thrallhod iwent into knighthod.'

[2] Doubt is thrown upon the existence of these. It seems tolerably certain that they are at any rate unknown to early chivalry, and that the stories about Queen Eleanor told by John de Nostredame (*de Nostra Dama*, not *Nostradamus*) and Andreas Capellanus are not historical.

called Joy. *Joie d'amour* is the sum of chivalry. Hence the term 'gay science' (*gay saber*). Love, generosity, courtesy, all depend on joy, the enthusiasm of life. To this belong graceful behaviour, honour to men, respect to ladies, and noble pride (*parage*). A knight must carry joy into every part of life. He may never be melancholy, except when his lady does not smile on him. When we think of the gloom of Norman and German barbarism, we may be thankful to the Provençal poets for preaching joy as a virtue; and we see in it another instance of the buoyancy and energy which shine out in all the great works of the Middle Ages. As Henri Martin writes:—

'La joie gauloise, cette vivacité expansive, cette exaltation habituelle de l'âme du héros est toujours aussi héroique, mais attendrie et humanisée par un sentiment plus doux, par une flamme qui épure le cœur des sentiments haineux et sombres, des tristesses malsaines, de la paresse, de l'avarice et de la dureté.'[1]

There is joy in the architecture, the music, the painting and sculpture, the feasts, dances and tournaments. The pilgrimages, the holy offices, the fanaticisms, have their portion of joy. St. Francis is a miracle of joy; and it is perhaps this quality which more than any other separates the twelfth and thirteenth centuries from the twilight of barbarism which precedes, and the complication of religious and political problems which follows. Joy is incompatible with doubt; the troubadours put into that one word what was the character of the age, 'jouyr loyalement de son estre';[2] an age full of sanguine hope, one which saw great things in progress, and believed enough in the divine government of

[1] *Hist. de France*, iii. 379. [2] *Montaigne.*

the world to hope for greater things in the future. The spirit of joy was natural to such an age :—

A la joie appartient;

or as Blondel de Nesle wrote,

d' amer moult finement;
et quand li lieus en vient,
li donners largement.
encor plus y convient
parler cortoisement.
qui ces trois voies tient
jà n'ira malement.

The country of the *langue d'oc* was accessible to ideas and customs brought from Spain, Sicily and Italy. The Provençals were acquainted with the *lingua di sì* or Italian, the *vulgare eloquium* of Dante's treatise, organized and brought into shape by Dante himself and his contemporaries, but already existing, and furnishing to the transalpine nations something of the classical tradition, enfeebled but lasting, just as the Italian Gothic never gave up using the forms of Roman architecture and sculpture.

In France (to use the modern name) two types of language were already fixed in the eleventh century, both known as 'Roman' and 'Gaulish'; the Southern or *Langue d'Oc* (also called *Limousin* and are more commonly *Provençal*), which prevailed not only in Provence itself, but as far as the Loire on the west and the Rhone near Lyons on the east, as well as in the south-east of Spain ; and the northern or *Langue d'Oil*, also termed French.[1] The words *trouba-*

[1] The Provençal language, as written by troubadours, was never a popular or national tongue, but a *langue courtoise*, the conventional character of which is shown by the fact that it continued unaltered for two centuries, from the time of William of Poitou (1070) to the Crusade against the Albigenses, in which the Troubadours perished.—Hueffer, *Troubadours*, p. 8.

dour (*trobador*) and *trouvère* tell their own story. The former is *langue d'oc*, the latter *langue d'oil*. The poetry of Languedoc was to a large extent lyrical and amatory, and connected with music; but that of the north, epic, narrative and social. The northern or French tongue (*langue d'oil*) was considered as the nobler of the two; and from this source proceed the tales of war and adventure, which may be distinguished though not disentangled from the poems and romances, the subject of which is love and gallantry.

As Paris became the capital of monarchical France, and drew to itself the paramount political and military power, the language of the Isle de France became the language of letters. From its central position and its military and political ascendency in Europe the chivalry of France took the lead in arts as in arms, and the court of Paris succeeded that of Provence as the seat of the Muses. Lyrical poetry did not flourish in northern France as in Provence. Each literature borrowed of the other, and no clear line of division can be drawn; but the greater part of the Provençal poetry is lyrical, and of the northern narrative.

Hence it resulted that the French chronicles, romances, and narrative poems became the accepted form throughout Europe; the legends and histories of England, Wales and Germany, almost forgotten at home, came back in a French dress and were translâted from the French into their native tongues. Even the *Nibelungenlied*, which never took root in the west, has something of a French colour in its chivalric setting; whilst the well-known German poems of *Parzival* and *Tristan* make use of French words and terms of chivalry, and are derived, though not translated, from the French

originals, of Lorris, Meun, Christian of Troyes, and other poets, themselves drawn from Cambrian and Armorican sources.

In the northern poems love, though not entirely omitted, plays but a small part. The same may be said of the boisterous and unsentimental love-passages of the *Nibelungenlied*. Moral delicacy and fine shades of sentiment are not native to the primeval Teutonic genius. The Alrunas and Walkyries of Scandinavian and German antiquity are majestic, but not feminine; and Kriemhild and Gudrun have little in common with the tender figures of the Celtic Enid and Yseult. Such creations as these, whether they took their rise on the Rhine or in Bavaria and Austria, were of genuine German origin, and point out what might have been the development of German poetry, had it not come under the various influences which combined to produce chivalry. That wonderful people, the Normans, crusaders, sea-rovers, law-makers, builders, formed a link to bind together the Celtic, the Latin or Romance, and the Teutonic races. Leaders in the Crusades, they set a pattern of Christian chivalry to other nations, and created a new ideal for the writers of heroic verse. The heroes of the *Nibelungenlied*, a purely German work, have no chivalry except courage. But when French chivalry had established itself as the type of perfect chivalry, the Germans received back their own epics in a French shape, translated them into their own tongues, and converted their native sagas into poems of French rather than German character. So too, in Britain. Havelok the Dane, Guy of Warwick, and Arthur of Wales travelled into France and learnt to be Frenchmen before they were received back to form part of the literature of their native countries.

JOHN TALBOT, EARL OF SHREWSBURY, PRESENTING A VOLUME OF FROISSART'S CHRONICLES TO HENRY VI AND QUEEN MARGARET.—Reg. 15 E vi, *f* 2.

[*Face page 205.*

The French fashion spread throughout Europe. Germany adopted *Roland* and *Aliscans*, the latter translated under the title of *Willehalm* by the famous poet Wolfram von Eschenbach. *Ferumbras*, *Otinel* or *Oluel*, and *Huon of Bordeaux* form part of the English cycle. In Scandinavia we have the *Karlamagnas Saga*, *Ogier*, and *Doon of Mayence*. *Roland* and *Ogier* were known early in Italy, where *I Reali di Francia* is still published as a popular book; and a later spring of French romance inspired Boiardo, Ariosto, and Tasso. The Spanish *Palmerin* and *Amadis* were written after a French model. Indeed, whatever the subject and the treatment, the French *chanson de geste* is the pattern of all romantic epics down to the *Faerie Queen*, and the French *roman* is the prototype of all fiction, till 'the creation of the novel'[1] by the English school of the eighteenth century diverted the aims of literature from the exposition of *beaux sentiments* to the study of actual life.

We may mention, in illustration of this interaction of forces, that the stories of the Round Table, originally proceeding from Wales, were localized also in Cornwall, thence went over to Brittany,[2] where they assumed a new localization, then found their way into Northern France and took shape there, and were again imported into Wales in the twelfth century and re-translated into Welsh; superseding the ancient bardic songs, the literature of the people, many

[1] Gosse, *Modern English Literature*, p. 265.

[2] It is now generally admitted that 'Bretagne bretonnante' was a Welsh colony, and distinct from the Gallo-Iberian population (probably very sparse) among which it settled. Amongst other indications the ecclesiastical organisation is Breton not Gallic; and the language is British not Gaulish.

of which, as Giraldus Cambrensis (1146-1220) reports, were still in existence in his time.

The Latinized Francia of which the Isle de France was the centre was thus the crucible in which all the legends of Europe, classical, Teutonic and Celtic, were fused into one form. We must distinguish between the lyric or Provençal art of song, in which no nation surpassed or equalled its inventors, and the romances and chronicles, whether *fabliau*, *chanson de geste*, or history sacred and profane; all of which might be written in prose or rhyming verse of eight, ten or twelve syllables,[1] a less dignified but more attractive and manageable metre than the long lines of the High German Epic or the irregular rhythms of Beowulf and Cædmon.

The two principal forms of French literature as connected with chivalry, are the *Chanson de geste*,[2] the *Roman*, and the *Fabliau*. The *chanson de geste* is epic—a poetical chronicle of actions done by persons believed to be historical; chanted with musical interludes on harp, rebeck and violin (*vielle*), instruments derived respectively from the Celts, the Arabs and the Germans. Other elements of various kinds combine to form the mediæval epic. It admits the miraculous, the sentimental, and the comic; but its principal subject is deeds of arms. The *chanson de Roland*,

[1] Strictly, twelve and thirteen in alternate pairs; the Alexandrine verse is called from the 'Alexander' *chansons*.

[2] 'Poeme en vers décasyllabiques ou en vers Alexandrins, où est racontée d'un façon légendaire l'histoire de personnages historiques.'

Hanc prudens gestam noris tu scribere, lector,
Einhardum magni magnificum Caroli. *Littré*, *s.v. Gesta*, *æ.*

(Lines prefixed or subjoined to some MSS. of Eginhard's *Life of Charles the Great.*) Ducange, *s.v. gesta.*

So *Gesta Dei per Francos*; *Gesta Romanorum*; where, however, *gesta* is plural.

sung by Taillefer the *jougleur* before the Battle of Hastings, is a true epic, rough in style and diction, but containing passages of the highest beauty, both heroic and pathetic. This form of poetry found its way to the South, and the chronicles of Welsh and Frankish paladins were recounted in Provençal verse.

The *chanson de geste* is Frankish or Teutonic in origin. The *Song of the Niblungs* is a poem of similar character, dealing with ancient German traditions. Etzel (Attila), Gunther and Siegfried were forgotten by the Franks of Gaul, but they retained a tradition of the Frankish King Karl, '*francisé*' (as M. Martin says) both in name and in character, Charlemagne, the pattern of a French knight.

The *chanson de geste* dates back to remote antiquity. All primitive literature is metrical, and that of the Franks is no exception to the rule. The earliest Northern French writings are metrical lives of the Saints, as, for instance, the *Life of St. Leger* of the tenth century. These poems, both in style and language, are of popular origin; there existed side by side with them, and distinct from them, a clerical literature, in Latin, prose and verse. Such writings as those of Abélard and Bernard have nothing in common with the works of their contemporaries who wrote in French; but as the French language grew it dislodged the Latin. The subjects of popular writing were religion and war; and the Lives of the Saints, as well as those of the paladins, may be called *chansons de geste.* The *Life of St. Alexis* (eleventh century) is the best instance of the metrical Lives of the Saints, as the *Chanson de Roland* is the noblest secular epic of the class. To these may be added Biblical records, *contes devots*

or *contes pieux*, treating of the Passion, the legends of Judas and Pilate, the Miracles of our Lady, etc.

French epic is originally Germanic, *i.e.*, Frankish.[1] Tacitus[2] speaks of 'ancient poetry' telling the deeds of the forefathers of the race; and though these primeval Sagas had perished, the habit remained in the nation. Charlemagne himself collected *barbara et antiquissima carmina, quibus veterum actus et bella canebantur*,[3] and thus laid the foundation of the *chanson de geste*; though it must be remarked that Charlemagne's compilation (if not translated into Latin) was written in German, whereas the *chansons de geste* are among the first monuments of the French language.

The conversion of Chlodowig (496) gives a date for the marriage of the Frankish and Gallo-Roman races on the soil of Gaul, and for the absorption of the Frankish tongue by the Roman. Chlodowig and other Merovingian kings became the heroes of epic ballads or chronicles of which hardly the names survive.[4] Charles Martel is confounded with his more famous grandson. Nothing is certain in these cloudy regions, in which a new language was being rapidly made; but it may be set down as probable that the Merovingian poems were partly clerkly compositions in Latin, partly popular, written in a language which cannot properly be

[1] For the whole of this subject see Léon Gautier in the *Histoire de la Langue et de la Littérature Française*, etc., edited by L. Petit de Julleville. Paris, 1896.

[2] *Germania*, C. II. Celebrant carminibus antiquis (quod unum apud illos memoriae et annalium genus est) Tuisconem deum terra editum, et filium Mannum originem gentis conditoresque.

[3] Jornandes.

[4] M. Gautier mentions poems treating of Chilperic, Theodoric and Dagobert, the substance of which may be traced in *chansons de geste* of the eleventh and twelfth century, the *chanson d' Aliscans* and *Floovant* for instance.

termed either German or French; war-songs, sagas of heroes, dirges and rounds.

Whatever the process may have been, by the middle of the ninth century the German and French (or Gallo-Frankish) nations had become separate. The treaty concluded at Verdun in 843, by which the empire of Charles the Great was partitioned among his three sons, is the point which marks the distinction of the two nationalities, cut off from each other by the middle state of Lotharingia. The Ripuarian Franks remained German, the Austrasian and Neustrian Franks became French. The same period marks the development of Teutonic cycles, the *Ludwigslied*, the *Waltharius*, with subjects which appear in the *Nibelungen* cycle, and which belong to genuine German antiquity; and of French cycles, Merovingian and Carlo-vingian, belonging to the tribes planted in Roman Gaul. The German epics were originally pagan, akin to the Norse or Hebridean and Irish Sagas. They became Christian in course of time, because the Germans, like other nations, were absorbed into the Catholic Church, and whilst preserving many pagan customs forgot their pagan theogony and mythology. The French *Chansons de geste* were Christian from the first.

The *chansons de geste* moreover profess to be historical, and were believed to be so; the German epics were legendary and mythological. Charles himself and his predecessors; Roland, Ogier the Dane, Count William, Gerald of Roussillon, however mythical they may have become, were persons who actually lived and did some of the actions attributed to them. Etzel (Attila) too is historical; but Siegfried and Gunther are as mythological as Woden and

the 'worm' Fafnir. In the German epic we have mythology put into credible action and adorned with poetical and historical colour; in the *chanson de geste* we have history, amplified, distorted and moralized, with miraculous accretions and the introduction of typical characters. The result in the long run is very similar, and it was easy for the German epopoeia to assume the forms of chivalry, which from being French had become European; but the difference of origin must not be ignored in comparing the French epic with the German.

Of the *chansons de geste* there are several cycles—the primeval or Merovingian cycle, of which only indications remain; the *Geste du Roy* or cycle of Charles; those of Count William, Ogier, Garin of Lorraine; and finally the cycle of the Crusades, which last would have been historical, had it been possible for the writers of those times to separate history from miracle and dramaturgy.

As founder of the empire and sovereign of the East and South, Charles the Great is here forgotten; he is the hero of the war with Islam in the French romances: and it is curious on the other hand, to find him in Spanish tradition the ally of the Moors, while the legendary hero Bernardo de Carpio is set up as a Christian champion against Roland.

We must pass over the long list of classical poems which rose up at the side of the national epics. Though the Greek language was forgotten, the Greek stories were preserved in Statius, Virgil, and Ovid, as well as in the compilations known by the names of Dares and Dictys Cretensis;[1] and clerkly writers introduced a classical cycle in rivalry with

[1] See the metrical verses of Dares by Joseph of Exeter (1170), a good specimen of mediæval Latinity. He also wrote an *Antiocheis* on the siege of Antioch.

native themes. Priam, Hector, Pyramus, Narcissus, Julius Cæsar, and Alexander are mentioned in the twelfth century Provençal poem of *Flamenca*. Among the Frankish poems of this order, and belonging to the same period, are the *Romans* of Thebes, Troy, Philomena, Daedalus, Io, and versions or imitations of Ovid's *Art of Love* and *Remedies of Love*.

By far the most important and influential body of poetry, as expressing and setting a pattern of sentiment and a rule of chivalric conduct, is that which M. Léon Paris, terms the *E'popée Courtoise*, and which gives us a picture of knightly society, ideal and conventional, but not altogether unreal. The stories of chivalry do not describe a purely imaginary state of society.[1] Such stories would have been as wearisome as they are to modern readers, if they had not described what was familiar and accepted. The Homeric poems and the Northern sagas, with their long descriptions of bloodshed and gests of arms, would have fallen flat if they had only told of a mythical age of paladins and knights-errant —and so the romances of Guy of Warwick, Sir Ysumbras, Sir Perceforest, Sir Amadis, and many more must have stirred the emulation of hearers to whom war, or at least its imitation, was a reality.

Roman is a generic term, comprising tales whose principal theme was chivalry, and love-stories told at first in verse, and later in prose. As chivalry and love were never

[1] 'The machinery was indeed imaginary, or rather, like that of Homer, it was grounded on the popular belief of the times. But the turn of incidents resembled, in substance, those which passed almost daily under the eye of the narrator. Even the stupendous feats of prowess displayed by the heroes of those tales, against the most overwhelming odds, were not without parallel in the history of the times.' Sir W. Scott, 'Essay on Chivalry' for the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

separated, the love-stories are full of deeds of arms, and love has a place in the records of heroes.[1]

The *chansons de geste* were in their prime in the eleventh century; the Romances, as we may term them, do not appear till the twelfth. They are largely affected by the lyrical poetry of Provence, and take their form in the Breton legends which the conquest of Brittany by the Normans brought into fashion. The principal hero of this cycle is the British Arthur, the type of perfect courtesy (*curialitas*); and with him Lancelot, Tristan, Percival, and the other knights of the Round Table. Deeds of arms and love passages are its only subject: wars with Saracens, single adventures, tournaments, combats with giants and monsters; all illumined by the light of love, the *amour courtois* of the Provençals, which is for the most part love *par amours*, the devotion of a knight to a lady whose husband is unworthy of her. The loves of husband and wife, of maiden and youth are not excluded; 'the maiden passion for a maid' is here and there beautifully set forth: but the chief subject is that chivalric form of love sung by the troubadours, which ignores or despises the married estate, and extols the more romantic sentiment.

Although the foundation of the Romances may be licentious, according to a stricter rule than that of mediæval custom, and though love is set forth in them without reserve or concealment, as by Homer and Herodotus, the language is almost always decorous, and however delicate may be, the situations represented there is no heightening of voluptuous effects, no innuendo, no playing with double meanings, as

[1] Léon Gautier *Ibid*, Chap. IV.

in the erotic poetry of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The love passages are related as simply as the feats of arms, and there is often present an exquisite refinement of sentiment and a warmth of passion which is the symbol, if not of innocence, at any rate of unconsciousness and sincerity. The 'smile of Galahad,' in the *Saint Grail*, brings a false and unfamiliar note into the conception of the flower of chivalry in one of the most beautiful passages of mediæval sentiment.[1]

What can be more beautiful or less licentious than the scene in Beroul's *Tristan*, where King Mark finds Tristan and Iseult sleeping in the heat of the day?

Oyez comme ils se sont couchés :
Dessous le cou Tristan a mis
Son bras, et l'autre, ce me semble,
Lui avait par dessus jeté.
Iseult l'a étroit accolé,
Et il l'avait de ses bras ceinte.
Leur amitié ne fut pas feinte.
Leurs deux bouches étaient voisines,
Et cependant ne se touchaient.
Vent ne souffle et feuille ne tremble.
Un rayon descend sur la face
D'Iseult, qui plus reluit que glace,
Ainsi s'endorment les amants,
A' mal ne pensent l'un ni l'autre.

(Modernized from Beroul's *Tristan.*)

Or the death of Tristan and Iseult:—

Turning to Iseult he says: 'What will you do when I am dead? Can Iseult live without Tristan? . . . Let us die together, my fair and sweet love.' 'My friend,' says she, 'it is what I most desire. . . . Shame were it for Tristan to die without Iseult, we two who have been one flesh and one soul' They embrace; and in that embrace his heart burst,

[1] Dante, *Inferno* v. The story as told by Dante is identical with the version in the *St. Grail.*

and she, seeing him dead in her arms, died too from excess of grief.

Or this, from the *Chevrefoil* of Marie de France (twelfth century) :—

D'euls deus fu-il tut autresi
come del chevrefoil esteit,
ki a la codre se preneit.
Quant il est si laciez et pris,
e tut entur le fust s'est mis,
ensemble poient bien durer ;
mès ki puis les volt désevrer,
le codres muert hastivement,
e chevrefoil ensemblement.
'Bele amie, si est de nus,
ne vus sanz mei, ne mei sanz vus.'[1]

Chevrefoil i. 394.

Or this, where Guinevere thinks she has slain Lancelot by her cruelty.

Quand mon regard et ma parole
lui refusai, fus-je point folle ?
folle ! bien plus, que Dieu me garde !
cruelle fus et felonesse ;
et je pensai en faire un jeu !
mais ainsi ne le pensa pas,
et ne me l'a point pardonné.
nul, hors moi, ne lui a donné
le coup mortel . . . .
dieu ! pourrai-je avoir le pardon

[1] Il en était de leurs deux cœurs
tout ainsi que du chèvrefeuille
qui au coudrier se prenait.
quand il est ainsi lacé et pris,
et tout autour du bois s'est mis,
ensemble peuvent bien durer ;
mais si l'on veut les séparer,
le coudrier meurt promptement,
le chèvrefeuille également.
'Belle amie, ainsi est de nous,
ni vous sans moi, ni moi sans vous !'

de ce meurtre et de ce péché ?
non point ! Plus tôt seront séchés
tous les fleuves, la mer tarie.
hélas ! Com fusse confortée,
si une fois avant sa mort
je l'eusse entre mes bras tenu !

Chrétien de Troyes. *Le Chevalier de la Charrette.* (modernized).

Or this, from *Eliduc* by Marie de France, where Guilladon sets her fancy on Eliduc :—

Cele l'aveit par la mein pris,
desur un lit èrent asis ;
de plusurs choses unt parlé,
icele l'ad mult esgardé,[1]
sun vis,[2] sun cors, è sun semblant :
dit 'en lui n'ad mès-avenant,[3]'
forment[4] le prie en sun curage.[5]
Amurs i lance sun message,
qui la somunt[6] de lui aimer,
palir la fist è suspirer.

Eliduc, who is married, thinks of his absent wife :—

De sa femme li remembra,
e cum il li asseura
que bone fei li portereit
e leaulement se contendreit.

Or again, from the Romance of *Lancelot du Lac* :—

Guinevere: Et combien a-t-il que vous me aymiez tant ?
Lancelot : Dès le jour que ie fus tenu pour chevallier . . .
Guin. : Par la foy que vous me devez, dont vindrent ces amours que vous avez en moy mises ?
Lance. : Dame (faict-il) vous le me feistes faire, que de moy feistes vostre amy, se vostre bouche ne me a menty.
Guin. : Mon amy (faict-elle) comment ?

[1] regardé. [2] visage. [3] rien que d'avenant. [4] fortement. [5] cœur. [6] conseille.

Lance.: Dame (faict-il) ie vins devant vous quant ie ai prins congié a monseigneur le Roy . . . . et vous me dictes que vostre amy et vostre chevallier voulliez que ie feusse. Et ie dys 'à dieu, dame!' et vous dictes 'à dieu, mon biau doulx amy!' Ce fut le mot qui preud-homme me fist, se ie le suis . . . . cest mot ma conforté en tous mes ennuys—cest mot ma de tous maulx guary. Cest mot ma faict riche en mes povretez.'

Or the well-known parting of the same noble lovers in Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*.

'Therefore, Sir Launcelot,' says the penitent queen, 'I require thee and beseech thee heartily, for all the love that ever was betwixt us, that thou never see me more in the visage . . . . for as well as I have loved thee, mine heart will not serve me to see thee; for through thee and me is the flower of kings and knights destroyed' . .

'Madam,' he replies, 'I pray you kiss me, and never no more.'

'Nay,' said the queen, 'that shall I never do, but abstain you from such works.' And they departed. But there was never so hard an hearted man, but he would have wept over the dolour that they made. For there was lamentation as they had been stung with spears, and many times they swooned.—Book xxi, 9, 10.

Such a literature half redeems its lax morality by its tenderness and delicacy. It must be judged by the standard of its own day; and if its tendency was on the whole to raise that standard, it would not be fair to set down to the account of literature what was one of the conditions of its existence. Love *par amours* was in possession. The Trouvères did not invent it: they brought out its noble side, cleared it from grossness, and infused into it a spirit akin to that of manly honour. The extravagance of Provençal sentimentality, the rules of Courts of Love, the obligation of unchastity, were in a great measure ignored by the Trouvères, who, living in a society in which morals were lax, and great freedom of intercourse and still greater freedom of speech was commonly allowed between men and women, upheld the

virtues of constancy, courtesy and self-abnegation, put license itself under regulation, and by refining helped to purify the manners of a time in which brutality and self-control, high ideals and unworthy action were strangely mingled. If it is objected that the *Heptameron* comes naturally after the *fabliaux*, and leads on to the lubricity of La Fontaine and Voltaire, it may be answered that the Renaissance period loosed the restraints of religion and morality, and that the Courts of Francis I and Henry III were tainted with Italian vices. Religion never sank lower than in the reigns of the last kings of the House of Valois: and it may be remembered also that in England the same literature was summarised in Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, and was the prelude to Spenser and Shakespeare. But England was little touched by the contamination of the *fabliaux*. The Court counted for less, and the divisions of rank were less extreme than in France. Shakespeare breathes the same air as Chaucer; an atmosphere of less refinement but greater purity. The English people lived, as Froude says,[1] 'in frank style, hating three things with all their hearts: idleness, want, and cowardice; and for the rest, carrying their hearts high, and having their hands full. . . . It was a life unrefined, perhaps, but coloured with a broad, rosy, English health.' Chivalry, indeed, in its beauty and its arrogant license, was never the mainspring of English life, but was always rather an ornament than a vital element in our nation. The wars of Henry V and Edward III were a national struggle against the French, not, as Froissart would have us believe, brilliant joustings and combats of generosity between barons and

[1] *History of England*, Chap. 1 (Vol. i. p. 43, Ed. 1858).

knights. We may have lost, but we also gained, by our insular rusticity.

In surveying the literature of chivalry a large place must be given to the symbolism which underlies all mediæva thought. To the mediæval mind all things were 'double one against another.' The Fathers accepted from the Hebrew Church, and transmitted to the Doctors of the mediæval Church the habit of allegorising everything. Allegory, type and antitype, analogy of seen with unseen, was the common thought of the Middle Ages, as every stained window and carved capital, every missal and bestiary bears witness. Nature was questioned, not of her own secrets, but for the revelation which she could give of immaterial things. Superstition has glimpses of truths which materialism ignores or denies: and the blindness of the Middle Ages never lost the inward vision of the unseen world. In Dante's *Comedy* allegory is as great an element as learning and poetic genius; and if the allegory is dormant in most of the romances of chivalry, their true meaning is revealed, not re-invented, in the *Morte d'Arthur* of Malory. The quest of the Sangreal is the 'highway of our Lord Jesu Christ'; King Arthur's Table is symbolical of the 'perfect faith,' the Siege Perilous is the seat of Christ at the Last Supper. The enchanted castles are the strongholds of Satan; the lions and dragons are the demons of temptation; the deeds of arms are acts of charity; the Crusade to Jerusalem represents the quest of the celestial city; the beauty of the knight in armour is that of holiness; the fair ladies are the virtues and Christian graces.[1] To the

[1] Digby, *Godefridus.*

mediæval mind all seen things bore relation to eternal verities; it was as natural for the relics of the Saints to work miracles as for bread to feed and water to cleanse: and thus, without any sense of strangeness, the romances, which might seem only meant to divert, contained lessons of piety and humility which were more evident to the simple minds of those for whom they were written than to the sophisticated intellects of our time, impatient of symbolism and animated by a faint archæological interest.

Thus, in the higher literature of chivalry, as represented by the *chansons de geste* and the romances, we find not only an immature art of story-telling, monotonous and childish in invention and execution, but also the exaltation of chivalry as a rule of life and a symbol of the Christian faith. This thought was present to the minds of those who wrote for noble readers, though many of them may have pleased their ears with merely listening to the tales of adventure and love lore, and looked no further; as in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, the allegory, which was dearer to the poet himself than the story, is disregarded by most of his readers.

Very different from these nobler forms of verse and prose are the *fabliaux*. They represent popular literature, and were only intended to amuse. Whether they came from the East, the native country of story-telling, or were part of the universal stock of narrative, of which fables of beasts and birds form a part, and which range as far as from North America to South Africa, identical in substance and only differing according to zoology, these popular tales have the same character. The chief motive is amorous or comic;

the commonest subject matter is how wives deceive their husbands. The incidents are trivial, the humour licentious. Indecent stories, like practical jokes, do not need much humour to make them acceptable. The French *fabliaux* are typical. They are often humorous, not unfrequently grossly obscene. Chaucer's *Miller's Tale*, and many of the *Novelle* of Boccaccio and other Italian writers, and after them La Fontaine's *Contes et Nouvelles*, are founded upon *fabliaux*, the subjects of which range over the whole field of fiction, from narratives of pure sentiment, like the beautiful tale of the *Falcon*, dramatized from Boccaccio by Tennyson, to the coarsest ribaldry. The personages of the stories are for the most part of the middle class, and the fortunate lovers are often priests and monks or friars. Many of these, no doubt, were composed by the lower class of *jougleurs*; merry-makers who combined with story-telling the arts of tumbling, conjuring, playing with knives and balls, and other feats of skill. Some of them were unfrocked clerks who had more education in letters than their patrons. It is possible that the *fabliaux* were written in the first instance for the meetings of craftsmen in their guild halls; but the mention frequently made of lords and ladies shows that they were not meant for the amusement of the townsfolk only, or of the guests who sat below the salt in the lord's hall, but for their betters, such persons as are introduced in the framework of the *Decameron* and the *Heptameron*, lords and ladies of high degree. The grossness of manners and speech which this implies accords with the general tone of morality which was sanctioned by chivalry; and if it seems a contradiction that such tales should have

been tolerated by the same hearers to whom the stories of Enid, Griselda, and Constance were addressed, the Middle Ages are made up of such contradictions.

The *fabliaux* disappear, or give place to *contes* and *nouvelles* early in the twelfth century; and at the same epoch also the *chansons de geste*. French literature took henceforward a new direction. It is a law of literary composition that when reading becomes common, and recitation is not the only method of communication of ideas, prose takes its place by the side of verse. Sermons, original or translated from the Latin, were among the earliest prose compositions in the 'Roman' language. Chronicles and histories came next. The first French chronicles were metrical, and the chief of them are of Anglo-Norman origin. Such are the metrical histories of the Dukes of Normandy, and the works of Geoffrey Gaimar, Wace, David, Beneit de St. More and other poets.[1] The earliest prose histories were translations of well-known Latin works 'del latin mis en roumans' such as the chronicles of the pseudo-Turpin, and of Geoffrey of Monmouth, the *Faict des Romains*, the *Livre des Histoires*. A great impulse to prose composition was due to the Crusades, and Jofroy de Villehardouin may be called the father of French prose.[2] His splendid successors are Joinville, Froissart and Commines, story-tellers rather than historians, but inspired with the love of truth and the spirit of chivalry, writers who in language, style and intention are not dependent upon the grace of remoteness or the picturesqueness of mediæval colour, but rank as classics.

[1] Jos. Bédier, *Hist. de la Langue* &c. Pt. II., Chap. ii.

[2] Hallam, Middle Ages, Ch. ix. (ii.)

French prose was born full-grown. Its birthplace was Northern France, the land of the trouvères. 'The tongue of Oil,' says Dante in his treatise *de Vulgari Eloquio*,[1] 'alleges for itself that on account of its easier and more pleasant dialect [2] whatever has been handed down or invented in vulgar prose, is its own; as for instance the Bible, the gests of the Trojans and Romans, and the beautiful tales of King Arthur, and many other histories and treatises *(doctrinae)*.' Once accepted, prose was the natural expression of the clear and logical character of French thought. From the last of the poetical romancers no great poet appeared in France till Villon: and with a few notable exceptions, the glory of French literature must be attributed to the *prosateurs* rather than the poets.

Fabliaux and *romans* were now written in prose. We cannot fix a precise date for the birth of this or any other fashion. Stories cannot always have been told in verse: the art of the *conteur* must always have included a more natural and free expression than that of verse: and from the moment that prose was admitted to the position claimed for verse by the trouvères, it became increasingly popular. The French language, in its fertility, its terseness and flexibility, and its unique power of using the same diction in conveying lofty sentiment as in describing events of every day, without danger of becoming either high-flown or commonplace, was a vehicle for narrative equal to any that had been known in the world. From the middle of the 13th century prose narrative held the field. The *romans* and

[1] Bk. i. ch. 10.

[2] '*vulgaritatem*;' '*lo suo più facile e più dilettevole volgare*; *vulgaritas*, *volgare*, meaning the 'vulgar' tongue, Romance, not Latin.

fabliaux were recast in prose; and the literature of chivalry henceforward, both in France and in other countries, was a prose literature. We have not space to go into details on this subject. It is enough to say here that the romances of chivalry, especially those of the Arthurian cycle, became popular in prose versions, and that the brilliant chivalric epoch, of which Edward III is the Arthur and the Black Prince the Lancelot, drew its inspiration from romances written in the tongue of Froissart and translated into that of Chaucer.

In all this mass of literature (the largest part of which has never been printed, but lies unedited in the libraries of Europe) a rule of life is inculcated or assumed. And as we said at the beginning of this chapter, the manners of the age corresponded to it both as cause and effect. Courage, honour, devotion to love, are its virtues; cruelty, false honour, licentiousness, the corresponding vices. One notable fact is that religion is absent. There are religious poems, it is true; and the knights and ladies perform their religious duties. But a religion of the heart forms no part of the life of knights and ladies. They are as pagan as if Christianity did not exist; and the Grail itself is but a knightly quest, not the lofty symbolism of Tennyson's *Idylls*. It could not well be otherwise: for though knighthood was a sacrament, and its vows consecrated by religion, the tournament was not sanctioned by the Church, and the worship of woman according to the rule of chivalry stood in contradiction to all those principles of purity which the Church never failed to impress upon her children. Chivalry, for all its high ideals, was in practice an affair of the world;

and the poets preached the doctrine of free love, which governed the lives of knights and ladies, as a rule of virtue, not an indulgence to frailty, and ignored the religion which they professed.

We spoke above of the introduction of British legends into the literature of chivalry. The Celtic element, of the Cymric type, counts for much in the development of chivalry. Of the Gaelic poetry, that of the Scots of Ireland (in the sixth and seventh centuries) little need be said here. These poems are patriotic war-songs, or tales of magic not unlike those of the Welsh *Mabinogion*, or of war, hunting and love, such as we may read in the diluted and modernized version of Ossian. They do not belong to the age of chivalry; chivalry owes nothing to the 'Ollamhs' and 'Sennachies,' the bards of Gaelic song. Chivalry came into Ireland with Strongbow; and there, as in the Scottish Highlands, it was associated with the foreigner, the mail-clad destroyer of clannish anarchy, Norman or Saxon.

The Cymric literature of Wales and Brittany, larger and deeper than that of the Gael, was gathered into a body of poetry by a hierarchy of bards, who perpetuated by oral tradition a mass of heroic and amorous poetry, the central figure of which is the British Arthur. Taliessin and Merlin are the typical poet and sage of this cycle. If Arab poetry inspired the South of Europe with the sense of gallantry, a more worthy ideal of love as something sacred and mystical came in from the Cymric bards of Wales, Cornwall, and Britanny. 'The knight of the Arthurian cycle is entirely dominated by love.' 'The buoyant and elastic temper of the French *trouvère* was spiritualised in the Welsh singers

by a more refined poetic feeling . . . the touch of pure fancy removes its object out of the sphere of passion into one of delight and reverence.[1]

Ernest Renan remarks that in the earliest tales of the *Mabinogion*, those which date from the sixth and seventh centuries, the ideal of woman is purer than that which was current in the days of chivalry. 'Jamais une légèreté, jamais un mot grossier.[2]

The Cambrian love of liberty, the spirit of the mountains, and with it the finer touch of gallantry, came in to leaven the mass of French romance from which the form and much of the substance of English romance was derived. Poems and romances travelled backwards and forwards between Wales and Brittany. The native Celtic element, mixed up with German, Hebridean, and Scandinavian constituents, themselves partly Celtic, had to be Gallicized before it took shape in English. There was, moreover, a more direct influx of Celtic lore into England, introduced by such writers as Wace (1150), Geoffrey of Monmouth (1150), Gerald Barry, (Giraldus Cambrensis) (1180), Layamon (1200), Robert of Gloucester (1260), Walter Map (1200), and other writers who lived within reach of Wales. The collection of poems and tales called the *Mabinogion*, though the form is French, is native Welsh in substance: the names of places are Welsh, not Breton, and are connected with the historical or legendary annals of Wales;—for instance Cader Idris (Arthur's Seat), Rhyd y Saeson (Saxon's Ford), Cerig Howel (Howel's Craig)—many of which suggest remote antiquity, and have

[1] Green, *Short History*, p. 157.

[2] *Rev. des deux Mondes*, 2nd Series, vol. v., pp. 473-506 (1854).

never travelled out of their native country. Welsh romance conceals under its European or Gallic framework much early Celtic tradition, preserved in Wales in a different form from that which it took in France and Brittany; something of its original structure, as for instance in the use of Triads; and a great deal of natural refinement and imagination, in which it resembles rather the Provençal temperament than that of the north, whether Teutonic, Norman or French.

We must not omit here some reference to Matthew Arnold's *Study of Celtic Literature.* He attributes to a Celtic ethnological element, overlaid by English and Norman conquest and population, the sentiment and imagination which is a characteristic of English poetry from the earliest times. It has been commonly supposed that the British population of England was exterminated by the Anglian and Saxon invaders. But it is more probable that, as in other invasions, the aborigines were enslaved, not wholly destroyed; and in particular, that the invaders intermarried freely with the women of the conquered race, as in France; where the Iberian stock, modified by Celtic, Roman, and Frankish blood, survives to this day as the substratum of the French nation. Matthew Arnold attributes to the Germanic factor in the composition of the English people the qualities of 'steadiness and honesty'; to the Norman-Latin factor that of 'strenuousness.'

The worship of beauty, the purely sensuous side of the chivalric sentiment for women, took its literary form, as we have seen, from the Arabs. This was elevated by the Christian influence of the Latin Church,—for there was

some foreshadowing of woman-worship in the traditions of Rome, and not a little in the Roman life of the Empire, both Pagan and Christian—and by the influence of Celtic poetry. Such heroes as the Homeric Achilles, Roland, Sigurd, or Rustum, are not sentimental. They may be in love, but they know nothing of devotion and subjection (*donnoi*) to a single lady, nor of the knight's service due to all ladies. The Provençal troubadours introduced this; but we have not yet arrived at the moral equality and spiritual independence of woman. That is added from the Celtic strain; to some extent from the Gaelic Scots of Ireland, but much more from the Cymric bards of Wales and after them of Armorica. A new cycle of paladins, seers and ladies, Arthur, Owain, Tristram, Lancelot, Merlin, Guenevere, Enid, Lunedd, take their place by the side of Charlemagne, Virgil, and the daughter of the Emperor or the Soldan: the Frankish knight's sole occupation is deeds of arms; the knight of the Arthurian cycle quests and loves. He loves *moult fixement;* constancy (*droiture*) is his highest praise; *joie d'amour* his greatest happiness. Married love is exalted in these romances: unlike the Provençal code, which laid it down as a maxim that love and marriage were incompatible, and required that a lady of high degree must have not only a husband but a lover as well.

Throughout the literature of chivalry, from Provence to Germany and Wales, there is much monotony, in the endless encounters of knights with knights, or with giants, dragons. and enchanters. Warfare and the tournament were the principal amusement of chivalry, and the poets are

never tired of describing it. Love, the other theme, rules all, whether it be the tender constancy of Enid, the passion of Iseult, or the amusing and half serious intrigues of Flamenca. The German and English writers speak of women with honour and respect, the Provençals with tenderness, the Welsh with imagination, the French with subtlety and gaiety. In all, love is won and enjoyed with no thought of a reckoning, except from the vengeance of a jealous husband. That a woman should turn away from a lover is treason to chivalry, and no more conceivable than that a knight should refuse a challenge. One might have expected a more serious note from the north, the country of Gudrun and Sigurd, of Siegfried and Kriemhild. But the French influence carried all before it. Through the mist of chivalric licence may be discerned the national character which was one day to blossom in Lessing and Schiller, and which may be guessed at in the *Germania* of Tacitus; a serious, sentimental, domestic woman-worship, and side by side with it the more stormy and enthusiastic passion which is embodied in the legends of the Venusberg and the tale of Lohengrin and Ortrud. German chivalric song reaches its highest point in the poems of *Ereck* and *Enite*,[1] the *Tristan* and *Isolt* of Gottfried, and the *Parzival* of Wolfram von Eschenbach, all derived from the Welsh. There is in German poetry, as in German architecture and painting, a gravity and dignity which is wanting in French art, an asceticism at war with beauty, alien to the Celtic sentiment, a homely rusticity which is not overcome by French gaiety; as in the eighteenth

[1] Geraint and Enid.

century the same characteristics were modified, but not sub dued, by the more polished civilization of the French school. The Teutonic brotherhood, warring with Wendish heathenism, founding cities and spreading Christianity among the dreary moors and forests of the Baltic, knowing little of the graces of life, tournaments, feasts and ladies' bowers, is a symbol of the struggling, hard-striking, earnest, mystical, German nature, of which Tauler, Ulrich von Hutten, Albert Dürer and Luther are among the truest exponents.

England too had a literature of her own. The practical, cheerful, realistic character of the nation, shewn already in the Song of *Beowulf*, the works of Cædmon, (c. 650) and after Cædmon, of Alfred the typical Englishman, is fully represented in Chaucer. But from Alfred to Chaucer is a space of five centuries; and in the interval English literature was twice overwhelmed in a national downfall. The Northumbrian poetry, of which Cædmon and Cynewulf (eighth century) were the highest representatives, perished in the Danish conquest of the North and East of England in the ninth century. The new learning founded by Alfred in Wessex gave way to French influences in the reign of Edward the Confessor, and was overlaid and almost destroyed by the influx of foreign speech and manner which came in with the Conquest. For more than two hundred years French was the language chiefly known in the court and camp of England. Though the Anglo Saxon *Chronicle*, a monument of Alfred's care for his native language, continued to be written as late as the reign of Henry II, and though enough remains besides to show that the English speech was not dead, all works of importance were now written in

French or Latin, and were for the most part of French origin.

The marriage of Henry II with Eleanor of Provence in 1152, two years before his accession to the throne of England, brought the *gay saber* into England. This lady, the grand-daughter of William IX, Count of Poitou and Duke of Aquitaine, was not only the greatest heiress in Europe, suzerain of all Western France from the border of Brittany to the Pyrenees, but also the queen of troubadours. First as queen of France, and then by her second marriage queen of England, she brought into the north the splendour and gaiety of the Provençal court, and (if there is any truth in the legend of her intimacy with Saladin [1]) the licence and military display of the Eastern kingdoms which she visited on crusade with her first husband Lewis VII. Her son, the great soldier and royal savage Richard Cœur de Lion, was a patron of troubadours, and himself a troubadour of note.

It may be said in passing that, given a language as musical as Italian and as flexible as French, a strict rule of rhyme and diction, and a narrow range of sentiment and imagery, it did not require high poetical genius to make a troubadour. The poets of the school, when they had learnt the manage of their instrument, had no more difficulty in writing good poetry than the contemporaries of Ghirlandajo had in painting good pictures, or the architects of the thirteenth century in building beautiful churches.

French influence was again predominant in the long reign of Henry III, a reign in which England was brought into

[1] The dates make it almost impossible: but Saladin was not the only romantic Saracen; and Eleanor's amours were notorious, whether or not she pronounced judgment in Courts of Love.

closer relation with the family of European nations than at any earlier period; and the courts of the three Edwards were in externals as French as the court of George I was German. English literature, overlaid by this alien stratum, had to break up afresh from its native origins. The English language was formed in the chivalric period, and the English character, essentially the same as in the days of Alfred, expressed itself in its own speech, heightened and improved by French ideas and French words: but English literature is of a later date, and owes little to chivalry.

Our national literature, till its revival under Renaissance influences towards the end of the fifteenth century, was (as we have seen) almost entirely dominated by French fashions. Caxton and Malory followed their predecessors in translating French romances. Chaucer himself created modern English by transfusing it with French. But the language was already being formed through the medium of the French models, and the English cycle of romances, though inferior to the French, did good work in settling the forms of a literary language, which was neither that of Northumbria, Mercia nor Wessex, but drew from all sources, and took shape as classical English, about the time of the invention of printing.

A large number of romances in verse and prose have been preserved in manuscript, and many of these have been edited by Mr. Furnivall and other scholars in the series of the *Early English Texts Society* and elsewhere. The stories of Guy of Warwick, Sir Ferumbras, Havelok the Dane, Sir Otinel, the Arthurian legends, those of Alexander, Roland, and many others were treated by English writers on French lines. These

poems as a rule have little original merit; they are rough in versification, and want the delicacy both of language and feeling which commends the French originals. As long as French was the language of the court, they were read: and the growth of English prose and verse was a natural result of the decay of French as the language habitually used by the English gentry.[1] Popular songs, satirical poems, visions, catechisms, lives of Saints, and other religious works were largely disseminated among the English speaking part of the nation, and all these helped to form the language. English literature had to wait its turn till our reverses in France had cut off our nation from contact with the French, and taught it to rely upon its own resources. Edward IV and his English queen were patrons of the English speech, and from their time our language took rank with others, and chivalry ceased to be a reality. The heroic romance and the romance of love were superseded by the new influences of the Renaissance, and the same causes which put an end to chivalry 'made England England,' and created an English literature worthy to compare with those of France, Spain and Italy.

[1] The prevalence of French over English has probably been exaggerated. Henry I knew English; and there is no lack of evidence that the English lords and gentry, two centuries after him, spoke French as the Russians do now, but that their native language was English.

CHAPTER X

THE MILITARY ORDERS

Crusades the result of pilgrimage—Shrines and Holy Places—Conquest of Palestine by Omar—Hakem the Fatimite—Seljukian Turks—Gregory VII—Peter the Hermit—Urban II—Foundation of the Hospital—Gerard the first Grand Master—St. John the Baptist its Patron Saint—Commanderies—Raymond Dupuy—The three monastic vows—Knights, Priests, etc.—Serving Brothers—Seven *Làngues*—Clerkenwell—Rhodes—Malta—Privateering—Siege of Malta; la Valette—Order of the Temple—Hugh de Payens—Distinctions in the Order—The Red Cross—Supremacy in war—Rivalry of the Temple and the Hospital—*Beauséant*—Constitution of the Order—Deeds of arms—Battle of Tiberias—Fate of the knights—Ascalon—Egypt—Siege of Acre—Fall of the Order—Philip IV and Clement V—Accusation against the knights—Their trial—Jacques de Molay; his death and that of his brethren—Question of their innocence—Teutonic Knights (*Teutschritter*)—Their habit and rule—Their Conquests in the Baltic lands—Decline of the Order—Conrad of Thuringia—Duchy of Prussia.

THE custom of making pilgrimage to the Holy Places in Palestine was of primitive Christian observance, and was not seriously interfered with by the Mohammedan conquest of Palestine. To go on pilgrimage was the wish of every pious and every guilty heart. Nowhere could pardon be so certainly or so easily gained as at the innumerable shrines of Christendom. Poorer pilgrims had to be contented with visiting national or local sanctuaries; but rich and poor alike longed to visit the Holy Land. We must not blame the priests who encouraged pilgrimage, and imagine that the only use of pilgrimage was to enrich the Church. Much of the treasure poured into the hands of the clergy was spent in ornamenting the shrines and the churches, as may be judged from the vast sums seized and dissipated by Henry VIII. Clergy and laity believed that where miracles were wrought, there it was good for wor-

shippers to congregate. Many careless Christians might be won to religion by the associations of such a shrine as those of Westminster and Canterbury; dull imaginations were stirred, and vows were taken and paid which would never have been made in the ordinary conditions of town or country life. The clergy, no doubt, gained influence by encouraging pilgrimage: but it is the duty of clergy to seek for influence, if they believe in their mission. Above all, those religious vagabonds, the hermits and friars, like the Mullahs of the East, urged the faithful to visit the tombs of the Apostles at Rome, and the still more sacred sanctuaries of Palestine.

The tide of pilgrimage was checked but not stayed by the conquest of Palestine by the Caliph Omar in 637, and crowds of pilgrims assembled there every Easter, protected and even encouraged by the Arab conquror. It was not till the destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre by Hakem the Fatimite, Caliph of Egypt (1009), that the Christians began to fear for the existence of the Holy Places. But this passed away; the Church of the Sepulchre was rebuilt, and pilgrims resorted thither as before. The Seljukian Turks who took Jerusalem in 1067 were less tolerant and more greedy than the Arabs who went before them. The clergy were insulted, the pilgrims robbed and ill-treated, and violent hands were laid on the Patriarch himself. Stories of these hardships were brought back by those pilgrims who did not leave their bodies in the Holy Land, or in some part of the vast tract of land and sea over which they travelled. The idea of Christendom in arms proceeding to the conquest of Palestine had been in the mind of

Gregory VII before the Turkish invasion, and whilst he was still Archdeacon of Rome. But the inflammable materials stored up in Europe were fired by Peter the Hermit and Urban II; Gregory VII having been too much occupied with the nearer affairs of the Papacy to carry out a plan which was so well suited to his magnificent ambition.

About the middle of the eleventh century, some Italian merchants or gentlemen from Amalfi established a guest-house or *hospitium* for the relief of pilgrims, connected with the Church of St. Mary ad Latinos, opposite to the Holy Sepulchre, which was served by Benedictine monks. To this hospice or hospital, dedicated to St. John the Almoner, an obscure Syrian monk, was added a similar refuge for female pilgrims, under the patronage of St. Mary Magdalene. Greeks and Latins were received indifferently in these houses, and alms were distributed even to infidels. The master of the hospital bore the title of 'Guardian of the Redeemer's Poor.' In spite of occasional plunder and outrage, the pious work continued till the capture of Jerusalem by Godfrey of Bouillon, who visited the head of the Society, Gerard, and found him and his brethren living on bran and the coarsest flour, whilst the best was reserved for the sick and wounded who were taken there during the siege. Godfrey endowed the Hospital of St. John with lands in Brabant, and established it in wealth and dignity. Gerard counts as the first Grand Master. He drew up rules and statutes, and prescribed the habit of the brethren and sisters, a black robe with a cross of eight points in white linen. This is the well-known Maltese cross, which for three centuries led the chivalry of Europe to battle. A magnificent

church was built under the invocation of St. John the Baptist, a new and more distinguished patron; and soon after the first constitution of the Order it received grants of lordships and manors in all parts of Europe, and set up hospitals or commanderies (*commendatariæ*) in Provence, at Seville, Taranto, Messina, and other places, especially in maritime towns, which were received under the special protection of the Holy See.

In 1118 Gerard died, and the next Grand Master, Raymond Dupuy, converted the Hospital of St. John from a college of priests and charitable laymen and sisters into a military order, adding to the obligation of good works that of defending the Holy Sepulchre by arms. 'He gave back to the brethren,' it was said, 'the arms which they had quitted,' for the greater number of them were gentlemen who had retired from the world into religion. The knights were distinguished from the other brethren by a red surcoat with a white cross, which they wore over their armour. The combination of devotion, good works, and military prowess was a new thing in the world, and destined to have great results.

The monastic character of the Order is seen in the three vows of obedience, chastity and poverty. The first maintained discipline, the second gave freedom from worldly cares, the third set up corporate policy and interest in the place of personal avarice and ambition; for though the Order might be wealthy and powerful—and in the thirteenth century it reckoned 15,000 knights—no member of it could call anything his own, 'not even his will.' The brethren were to wear the plainest clothing, and to be content with

bread and water. They were to be the servants of the poor, 'and it does not become us as servants to be richer than our lords.' When to these obligations are added that of fighting against the Saracens, and the emancipation from secular and spiritual rule except that of the Pope alone, we have all the conditions which make an invincible body of Christian Janissaries or Mamelukes.

The arms of the brotherhood were to be used only against the infidels. The brethren were never to engage in wars carried on between Christian princes; and this restriction, though not always strictly observed, kept the military orders distinct from feudal levies or hired companies led by the great and little warriors of the Middle Ages. At the same time the military pride of the Hospitallers and Templars, their independent and semi-secular organization, and the remoteness of the Holy Land, kept them from becoming merely soldiers of the Pope. As long as there were infidels to be warred against in the East, in Spain, or in Prussia, they remained true to their vocation. If they were corrupted later, it was because the crusaders failed to conquer Islam, and they became an idle army, rich and powerful in all parts of Europe, but with nothing to justify their existence.

The Order of Knights Hospitallers, as established by Dupuy, consisted of three classes; Knights, Priests, and Serving Brothers. The first were chiefly laymen (though priests too were admitted); they must be of noble birth, and took the three vows as well as the priests. The second were to serve in the churches of the Order. The Serving Brothers (*Frères servans*) answering to the third class or lay brethren of religious orders, were of humble origin, also

bound by the three vows, and specially entrusted with the relief of the poor and sick who were the charge of the whole Order in general. Some of the serving brethren, however, at any rate at a later period, were noble; and there grew up a division into *servientes ad arma* ('serjeants' or esquires) and *servientes ad officia*, or servitors, the former being squires to the knights and capable of becoming knights themselves; the latter (not gentlemen born), discharging humbler offices. Thus we find in the English lists the same noble names among knights and *servientes*, and humbler names among the *servientes ad officia*. Every knight was allowed a squire and three horses. The knights were not permitted to hunt, or gamble, or resort to loose company and secular amusements, such as dancing and music. They frequented tournaments, though this was strictly speaking, a breach of rule; for their whole time was to be given to the service of God, the care of the poor and sick, and the practice and use of arms. The society was divided into seven *Langues* or Tongues—Provence, Auvergne, France, Anjou, Italy, Germany, England. Each Langue had a Grand Prior; and under him were established districts known as Bailiwicks, Preceptories and Commanderies.[1]

Though obedience was its rule, the constitution of the Order was democratic: the supreme authority was in the Chapter, in which each knight had a vote, the Grand Master only two. When in 1194 Alfonso of Portugal tried as Grand Master to do away with the liberties of the brethren and to make himself an absolute ruler, they offered

[1] The name 'Commander' is preserved or revived in modern orders of knighthood, *e.g.*, the Bath, which till 1815, like the Garter, contained only Knights Companions.

so stout a resistance that he had to abdicate, and returned to his own country.

It is worthy of remark that though the knights of St. John were recruited from the proudest houses in Europe in an age when chivalry was no bar to incontinence, they do not appear to have sinned grievously either by pride or luxury, but kept their vows of obedience and chastity.[1] Though they were bound to poverty, and possessed nineteen thousand manors, [2] they were not accused of avarice: in the decay of monastic virtue and the decadence of chivalry they seem to have preserved much of the purity of their original institution, and to have held up a mirror of chivalry before a world which professed but did not practise it, till the time when, driven from Palestine, they retired to Rhodes to carry on the same warfare against Islam, more nobly sustained, because they were now the defenders of Christendom against the Turks, not the helpers of the corrupt and ambitious sovereigns of Palestine.

It is not easy to find the cause of this. Probably the lives of the knights may have been purified and disciplined by the care of the sick and poor, to whose service they were vowed. The association of women in their work may also have prevented them from becoming mere soldiers; whilst the constant practice of arms in the presence of a dangerous

[1] Complaints were, however, heard against them. Gregory IX (1207-1241) (see Vertot i. 299) addressed a severe letter to the Order, complaining that their vows of chastity and poverty were scandalously disregarded, that their houses were dens of thieves, murderers and unbelievers, that they got money by unlawful means, confessed to none but their own priests, and were not clear of the imputation of heresy. There must have been some occasion for this outburst of bile.

[2] Matt. Paris, s.a. 1244 (Vertot, i. 221).

enemy, and the rivalry with the Templars preserved them from luxury and effeminacy. It may be also that the constitution of the Order, which made every knight personally responsible for the maintenance of its glory, kept them from the enervating influence of passive obedience which softened the monastic orders; who accepted too commonly the doctrine 'that it is easier and safer and more pleasant to live in obedience than to be at one's own disposal,' and acquiesced in the saying that a monk should be content 'parere superiori; breviarium legere taliter qualiter; sinere res vadere sicut vadunt.'

We need not dwell upon the subsequent history of the Hospitallers. Besides their houses in every part of Europe —their English house was at Clerkenwell—they established their headquarters at Rhodes in 1309, where they kept the Turks at bay for two hundred years, setting an example of valour to Christendom and receiving volunteers from all parts of the world. Driven thence by Soliman II (1522) after a famous siege of five months, they were settled by Charles V at Malta (1530) and reigned there till the French revolution, when the island was seized by the French (1798), who turned out the knights and held it till they in their turn were expelled by the English (1800).

The knights of St. John combined business with war and charity. They commanded the trade of the Levant, and as trade including privateering, they became as bold pirates as the Turks themselves. Their seven red galleys were at any time a match for twenty Turkish ships; and holding as they did in their position at Malta the middle strait of the sea, they could close the door between the eastern and western rovers.

In the glorious defence of Malta (1565), the whole power of Islam, 30,000 men on board 180 vessels, was directed against one little island. The commander of the Christians was John de la Valette, Grand Master of the Order, Mustapha and Dragut the most effective of the Turkish admirals. The knights, after withstanding an assault for many hours, sent to the Grand Master to say that they could hold the pass no longer. 'If so,' said La Valette, 'I will come and hold it myself.' Four thousand Janissaries were killed, and yet the fortress of St. Elmo was not taken. But the siege was pressed: the knights at St. Elmo prepared themselves for death, took the sacrament together, and went out to die. Not a man survived the final attack. The forts of St. Angelo and St. Michael, on the south side of the harbour, still remained in the hands of the Christians; and when the Turkish commander sent proposals for a capitulation, La Valette showed the messenger his ditches and said, 'Let your Janissaries come and take them.' Batteries, trenches, mines and continual assaults were tried in vain during July and August; and when in September a relieving force of Spaniards came, hardly one of the 600 survivors was unwounded. But the loss of the Turks had been as a hundred to one; and of thirty thousand invaders no more than five thousand left the island.

The Order of the Knights of the Temple was founded in 1118 by Baldwin II, King of Jerusalem, as 'a perpetual sacred militia'[1] to conquer and maintain the Sepulchre of the Lord, and to defend the outposts of Christendom.

[1] St. Bernard, *Exhortatio ad milites Templi;* a dull tract, unworthy of the subject and the author.

Hugh de Payens (de Paganis) and eight companions, French knights of noble birth, engaged, under the name of the 'Poor of the Holy City,' in a chivalrous compact (c. 1118) to protect the passes leading from Jerusalem to the plain of Sharon on the west, and on the east to the Jordan against the Bedouin marauders who robbed and murdered pilgrims. These adventurers are said by the historian John of Brompton (c. 1190) to have been attached to the Hospitallers and supported by their alms.[1] They took up their lodging in a house granted them by Baldwin II near the temple on Mount Moriah. Hugh de Payens, being sent to Rome by Baldwin II to beg the aid of Honorius II for a new Crusade, presented his companions to the Pope, and asked leave to form a new religious and military order in imitation of that of St. John. He was referred to the Council then sitting at Troyes (1124), and pleaded his cause there so well that the Fathers of the Council approved the design, and desired St. Bernard to draw up a rule for the new order. Among the regulations included in this rule (1128) which was on the Cistercian system, was the substitution of a certain number of Paternosters for the canonical services. Each Templar was allowed (as the Hospitallers) a squire and three horses. There was no distinction of dress between the highest and the lowest of the brethren. Whilst the brethren were bound to observe the strictest moderation, they were not to weaken themselves by asceticism. War was the business of the Order; and the business of each brother was to be a perfect man-at-arms. They were not compelled to stand

[1] *Hist. Angl. Script.* p. 1008 (Ed. 1652), *cibis et armis sustentati.*

during Mass; if they were weary they need not rise to matins. They might eat flesh on three days in the week. The sick brethren were to be well tended. The knights were to sleep warm, and in linen sheets, if they would. These were to keep watch upon each other, and so prevent secret austerities.[1] These relaxations point to early times of the Order: they were taken for granted, and no doubt enlarged, in later days, when *bibere Templariter* was a proverb. But no relaxations impaired the efficiency of the Templars as masters of the art of war.

The brethren were partly laymen, partly clerks, priests being freely admitted to the Order, a privilege which greatly increased its power, since like the knights of St. John, they were subject to no ecclesiastical authority but that of the Holy See, and were independent of episcopal censures. Besides the knights and the soldier-clerks there were also included in the Order, as in other orders, serjeants or esquires (*servientes ad arma*) and servitors (*servientes ad officia*).

The principal distinction between the institution of the Templars and that of the Hospitallers was that the Templars added to their monastic and military vows no obligation to tend the sick and relieve the poor. Their sole occupation as 'poor soldiers of Jesus Christ,' was to make war with the Infidels; and they soon became the head of all Christian chivalry. The military history of the Crusades is to a great extent the history of the two orders. In every battle and siege they are foremost; the Templars claiming the post of honour on the right, the Hospitallers on the left.

[1] Favyn. *Theater of Honour.* Engl: transl.: 1623.

By the rule established in 1128, the brethren were bound to be attentive to the offices of religion, public and private, 'to speak little, to give alms, to be gentle and courteous to the weak, the aged, the sick, to observe the fast days,' and keep always a spare diet. Poverty was one of their vows. Odo de St. Amand, taken prisoner by the Germans in 1170 and asked for ransom, said 'he had no goods but a knife and a girdle. The duty of a Templar was to conquer or die.' As in the case of the monastic orders, the obligation of poverty was in course of time held to be personal only and not to extend to the Order, which grew to enormous wealth by grants and bequests.

The dress of the brethren was white, symbolising purity of life; to which a red cross was added by Pope Eugenius III (c. 1150) whence their common appellation of 'Red Cross Knights;' their arms and accoutrements were without gold or silver ornaments. Another distinguishing mark of the Templars was that, unlike other knights,[1] they wore their beards long.[2]

St. Bernard's praises of the new order are interesting, as being the words of a contemporary. He contrasts their service as knights of Christ with that of the knights who fight not for Christ but for the devil, whose *militia* may be more justly termed *malitia*. Their first rule of life is obedience. There is no superfluity in diet or dress; *soli necessitati consulitur*. They live a common life, in sobriety and pleasant conversation, without the distractions of wives and children. Like the early Christians, the whole company have one purse, one heart, and one soul, and study nothing

[1] Except the Teutonic Order. [2] See Ducange s.v.v. *Barba, radere, capilli.*

so much as to submit their individual wills to that of their superior. They neither sit idle nor wander for their pleasure, they earn their bread by mending their arms and clothes. No insolent words, or immoderate laughter, are heard among them. They abhor chess (*scaccos*) and dice; they neither hunt nor hawk. They detest actors, sorcerers, jougleurs, licentious songs and gay spectacles[1] as vanities, falsehoods and follies They cut their hair short; never adorn, seldom wash themselves; they pride themselves on neglected hair, soiled with dust and burnt by the sun and the hauberk.

He goes on to describe their terrible aspect in battle. 'Wonderful and strange it is to see them at once as gentle as lambs and as bold as lions. I hardly know whether to call them monks or knights—wanting as they do neither the meekness of the monk nor the courage of the knight.'[2]

These mediæval Ironsides had all that made soldiers invincible in the days when battles were decided by the weight and skill of men-at-arms. Tactics were almost unknown—the thousands of half-armed peasants who formed the infantry were only there to be killed by the gentlemen; and a gentleman's business in battle was to ride straight, and use lance and sword, mace or battleaxe in the mêlée. Such a simple expedient as that of Joshua at the siege of Ai, or of Prince Edward at Evesham, was a rare refinement. 'The commendation of the age was, in short, the meed of striking feats of arms rather than of real generalship.'[3]

[1] *Ludorum spectacula*, probably tournaments.

[2] St. Bernard—*Exhortatio ad milites Templi.*

[3] Oman: *Art of War in the Middle Ages*, p. 52, and see above, chap. iv.

No troops, unless strongly supported by archers, or helped by some trap of art or nature, such as caltrops, pits, or ditches (into which the knights often blindly plunged) could resist the impact of the heavy horses ridden by knights secure in impenetrable mail.

In this warfare the military orders, taking precedence of other knights, and inspired not only with the love of glory but with religious zeal, assumed and maintained the lead. They had the advantage of discipline grounded upon the very foundation of their rule, and supported by conscience. Feudal armies were gathered together almost by chance. They dispersed as irregularly; they were led by lords whose claim to command came from the number of knights' fees that they owned, all jealous of each other, and ready to quarrel for precedence, like the Highlanders in 1745, even in the presence of the enemy. The Templars and Hospitallers brought to this ill-arranged material an example at once of valour and of order. The 'New Maccabees,' as St. Bernard calls them, were the bulwark of the Christian kingdoms in Palestine.[1] They were the leaders of defence and attack in the sieges of fortified places. The Grand Masters of the Temple and the Hospital took rank as sovereign princes; and their claim to lead, the Templars on the right, the Hospitallers on the left, was seldom if ever disputed.[2]

It was inevitable that the two orders should be rivals and often enemies. They made war upon one another from their magnificent castles, like any other feudal lords, and only laid aside their jealousy in the face of a common

[1] See Mills, *Hist. of Chivalry* vol. i. 338.

[2] See an instance (among many) in Vertot i. 226.

danger, and not always then. Innocent III tried to set them at one again; and Alexander III imposed a formal treaty of peace upon them, urging that 'they should be but one and the same Order in charity.' The last attempt to combine the two orders in one was made by Clement V. The Grand Master of the Hospital haughtily refused, and by doing so either saved his own order, or hastened the ruin of the Templars.

The red cross, from which the Knights got their name of Red Friars or Red Cross Knights, was added to the white mantle of the Order, at a Chapter held in 1147, at which Lewis VII of France and Pope Eugenius III were present. Their banner, named *Beauséant* from their war-cry, was half black, half white; 'fair and favourable to the friends of Christ, black and terrible to His enemies.'[1]

The constitution of the Order of the Temple, when fully settled, was as follows:—

The Grand Master, ranking as a sovereign prince, and living at the mother-house in Jerusalem; officers, such as Marshal, Prior or Preceptor of Jerusalem, Standard-bearer, Drapier, Turcopolier or Commander of the *Pullani*, native-born or half-caste Syrian Christians, who were formed into bodies of irregular cavalry;[2] and the Guardian of the Chapel, a round tent in imitation of the Temple at Jerusalem, which accompanied the Order in war. On the same model the Temple churches throughout Christendom were always circular in form; of which some few remain,

[1] De Vitry.

[2] The title *Turcopolier* became later attached to the English branch of the Order. Wm. of Tyre, 1. 7. xix. 24. *Turcopolier* was also the title given to the Bailiff of the English Tongue in the Hospital.

such as the Temple in London and the round churches at Northampton and Cambridge.

The progress of the Templars in the East was checked by the successes of Saladin. At Acre the two orders, 'who never counted their enemies,' did wonders. In the fatal campaign of 1187 their influence in the Christian army was as conspicuous as their valour. The Grand Master of the Templars refused to agree to the abandonment of Tiberias, which was intended by King Guy of Lusignan and Raymond Count of Tripoli, declaring that he and his brethren would put off their white mantles if it were done. They won their contention; with the result that the town fell, and the Battle of Tiberias (1187) gave the Holy City into the hands of the infidels. On the march thither a party of a hundred and forty Templars and Hospitallers attacked seven thousand Saracens, under the walls of Acre, and lost all but two or three of their number. The Grand Master of the Hospital, Desmoulins, was reported to have met in single combat Raymond of Tripoli,[1] disguised as a Saracen, and his horse being killed by the traitor, fell among a heap of slain, and was found thus honourably buried on the following morning. At the battle itself a few days later, the remnant of the Templars was left, by accident or treason, without succour, to be overwhelmed by the Saracen host, into the centre of which they had broken by the fury of their charge. The battle was hotly contested for many hours: but in the end the whole Christian army was

[1] The best modern authorities clear Raymond of Tripoli from the charge of treason brought against him by Gibbon, and believe that he gave good advice in consulting the abandonment of Tiberias on the defence of Jerusalem.

destroyed or captured by Saladin. The True Cross fell into the hands of the infidels, the Grand Master of the Templars was taken prisoner, the newly elected Grand Master of the Hospital[1] cut his way through the enemy, but died of his wounds the following day.

The courage shown by the Soldiers of the Cross in battle was nobly sustained on the following day, when they were called upon by Saladin to abjure Christianity or die. Not one of the 230 Templars who were taken prisoners thought his life worth buying at such a price; and by the command of the Sultan, who rightly judged the knights of the Temple and Hospital to be the worst foes of Islam—'firebrands (*carbones*) of Christianity,' he called them—the Emirs and Mullahs who stood around him were bidden to fall upon them and cut them down. These were the first martyrs of the Order. Many other prisoners claimed to be Templars and Hospitallers in order to share their death and their glory; and it was reported that a miraculous light was seen to shine above their bodies.

In the third Crusade, which was occasioned by the fall of Jerusalem, the Templars and the Hospitallers, both from their prowess in war and their knowledge of the country, made the leaders of the armies which came out under Philip II of France and Richard I of England go to them for counsel. The two Orders laid aside their rivalry, and fought in this and subsequent crusades as true brothers in arms. At the capture of Ascalon (1153) 200 Templars and their standard-bearer, Reginald de Argentine, an English Knight, refused to surrender, and were all cut down.

[1] Garnier, Grand Prior of England, who had been elected immediately after the battle of Acre.

It may be noted here that Saladin made honourable exception of the Templars in his general condemnation of the crusaders on the groune of bad faith. 'The Templars (he said) are pious men and keep their word,' and he valued their assent to any treaty or compact, knowing that they would do their best to see that it was carefully observed.

In the two unfortunate Crusades led by Lewis IX in Egypt, the Templars and Hospitallers again were the bravest of the brave. At Mansourah, where Robert of Artois, in the folly of knight-errantry, sacrificed his own life and knightly honour, and drew into the same destruction all those who followed him, the Grand Master of the Templars fought and fell. In this last century of their glory, the Templars, whatever their faults may have been, atoned for them by the display of matchless valour. The Mohammedan chroniclers agree with the Christians in describing feats of arms which on any other evidence would be incredible. The siege of Acre, in 1272, is glorified by the exploits of Edward I of England, a knight in whom all the best features of chivalry were united. 'If all other Christians went away, he and his groom Fowyn' (he said) 'would stay.'

The last siege of Acre, 1291, is worthy of being told in fuller detail than we have space for here. The scale of the operations is heroic. The besieging army was counted at 140,000 foot and 60,000 horse, and the courage of the defenders was equal to their desperate situation. They held the city for thirty-three days, at the end of which the garrison was starved out, and 60,000 Christians were killed or sold as slaves. The Templars and Hospitallers disdained to fly on board their own vessels. They maintained the fortress

of the Temple for three days more, and of 500 knights all but ten shared the glorious fate of their Grand Master. The small remnant of the defenders withdrew to Cyprus. 'A mournful and solitary silence prevailed along the coast which had so long resounded with the world's debate,'[1] and the rule of the Christians in Palestine has never been restored.

The sudden fall and destruction of the Order of the Temple within twenty years of its crowning glory at Acre, is one of the strangest and darkest chapters of history.

The acts of the trial have been preserved, and are a melancholy record of cruelty and superstition. The King of France, Philip the Fair, one of that series of strong rulers who broke the power of the great vassals of the Crown, had many reasons for wishing ill to the Order. The Templars, vowed to poverty, chastity, humility, and the service of the Holy Church, and in particular to the defence of the Holy Places in Palestine, had become possessed of great riches and broad lands in France. They were not like other vassals; they paid no feudal dues to the crown, being exempted by papal dispensation. They were, like the clergy, but more directly than the clergy, officially connected with the Pope; and unlike the clergy, they were the best soldiers in the world. The Temple, their principal house in France, was the strongest fortress in Paris. If they took part with any of Philip's enemies, they might do mischief both by their arms and by their wealth. Their wealth was, if report said true, only exceeded by their luxury, pride, and impiety. They had ceased to think of crusading. The Pope might call the

[1] Gibbon: end of ch. 59.

Grand Masters from Cyprus and Rhodes to consult with them about a Crusade, but could not prevail upon them to go back to Palestine. 'God sleeps,' said one of them, and Mahomet wakes. The Cross wanes and the Crescent waxes. Christ has forgotten the land of his nativity. If God is content with this, why may we not be satisfied? Only a fool would continue war against the Turks, since God suffers this to be. What wonder that the Turks prevail against the Templars?' They were believed to be stained with the worst Oriental vices, to be addicted to sorcery, to have denied the Christian faith, and to practise blasphemous rites in their secret meetings. The clergy were suspicious of them, both from their ill-repute as sorcerers, and from the immunity from episcopal jurisdiction granted to them by successive Popes. Their pride and wealth made them unruly subjects of the Pope himself. Sovereigns, and the French kings above all, coveted their riches,[1] and feared their strong organization, which made them, now established in Europe, a hindrance to the growth of monarchical power. They were especially dangerous in France, the principal seat of their possessions.[2] The nobles were jealous of their credit in war, and hated them for their arrogant talk, as if they were the only Christian soldiers. The people listened to all the slanders against

[1] The Templars at this date were reckoned at 15,000, an estimate which probably includes the *fratres servientes:* half of these were Frenchmen. They possessed 10,000 manors in France alone. The treasure which they brought from the Holy Land was 150,000 gold florins, and 'ten mules' burden' of silver coin. But mediæval estimates are given in round numbers and are not to be trusted. (Martin, *Hist de France* iv. 170.)

[2] Clement V expressly defends Philip from this charge, saying that he had no intention of retaining any of the possessions of the Templars in his own hands, as in the event he did.

them, and believed them to be the servants of the devil and corrupters of society. Hence it came about that when they were attacked they found no defenders. The popular estimate of them may be illustrated by the grant by Edward II, soon after the suppression of the Order, of a certificate to an English knight that he was no Templar. The knight had made a vow to let his beard grow, and feared that he might be taken for a Templar, and so be mishandled.

Philip IV was believed to have bargained with the Archbishop of Bordeaux, Bernard de Goth, a Gascon, to make him pope on condition of having his support in his general policy, and in particular for the destruction of the Templars. A few years later (1309) the new pope, Clement V, removed with his court to Avignon, and the 'seventy years' captivity' began.

The new pope had a difficult task. Popes have often found themselves between the hammer and the anvil, and sometimes have broken both. But Clement V was a weak man, and could not stand up against the sovereign who had made him pope, and in whose dominions he was detained. He put difficulties in the way; protested against secular or episcopal proceedings in the case of a religious order, which owed allegiance to himself alone; excommunicated inferior agents; tried to gain time, the usual defence of the weak, but finally gave in on every point. Philip proceeded with swiftness and relentless vigour. The Grand Master and many of his knights were enticed into France. On one day, without a word of warning, every Templar in the country was arrested and imprisoned, and the trials began on the next day. A hundred and forty of the brethren, from

the Grand Master himself to the humblest servitor, were submitted to tortures of the most horrible kind, tortures beyond the endurance of human nature, under the agony and terror of which, it may almost be said that any prisoner would confess anything. The usual result followed: they confessed what was desired, and recanted their confessions, as did Savonarola and Cranmer, and from age to age thousands of miserable wretches accused of witchcraft. The confessions extorted from them were to the effect that at admission to the Order a new knight was compelled to deny Christ, to spit upon the cross, and to undergo certain obscene ceremonies. To these accusations were added the worship of an idol, the use of magical spells, and the license to practise unnatural vices. The evidence would not in these days convict any criminal; but it was as good as that which sent witches to the stake as late as the eighteenth century; and there is one point in its favour, a remarkable agreement both in confession and denial. Moreover, what would seem to us monstrous and incredible from its absurdity did not appear absurd in that age. The revolting nature of the practices alleged, the grossness of the idolatry, the childish forms of blasphemy had an attraction from their very extravagance; and what was once conceived and put into action would grow apace. No motives can be alleged for these obscenities and impieties, only fit to bind together a camorra of criminals: but if these practices existed among a few who wished to shake themselves free of Christian beliefs, to gratify their appetites by sensual indulgence, and their intellectual curiosity by practising occult studies, we can believe that the pleasure of secrecy shared among a few would

EDWARD III. DOING HOMAGE TO PHILIP (VI.) OF VALOIS.—Reg. 20 C vii. *f* 72.

BURNING OF THE TEMPLARS AT PARIS, 1312.—Reg. 20 C vii., *f* 44.

[*Face page 255.*

attract others also. The society may have been in danger of corruption, without having become corrupt. The crimes deposed to and confessed may not have been merely a malignant fiction, and yet may have been practised by only a few of the brethren. We cannot disregard the antecedent improbability that so illustrious an order—the last public action of which, not twenty years back, had been the defence of Acre, a deed of arms second to none in the history of the Crusades—should be stained with crimes unknown to the infidels in combating whom the Templars had shed their best blood; the probability that the confessions were garbled by the judges; and the fact that the greater part of the confessions were only obtained in France, and in countries subject to the influence of France; for in the British Isles, Spain, Portugal, and Germany the knights were either wholly acquitted, or little was proved against them in spite of their general unpopularity.[1] The judges grew tired of their hideous work; but the king's command was urgent, and those of the Knights who had not died from the effects of torture, starvation, or the catarrhs and fevers engendered in the horrible dungeons of the Middle Ages, were brought out in batches and burnt, 556 in all, proclaiming their own innocence and that of the Order amid the roaring of the flames. Not one recanted his recantation. The Grand Master, Jacques de Molay, and the Master of Normandy, being brought out to hear their sentence of perpetual imprisonment pronounced before the door of Notre

[1] The letters of Edward II. (Rymer, *Fœdera* vol. iii.) both to the Pope and to European sovereigns, plainly show that his advisers did not believe the charges. The torture may or may not have been used; license was given 'corpora dictorum Templariorum in quæstionibus et aliis ad hoc convenientibus ponere' (*ibid.* A.D. 1310).

Dame at Paris, boldly expiated their confession by a brave recantation (13 Mar. 1314) thereby pronouncing sentence of death upon themselves, declaring with their last breath that the Order was pure, that the Churches and services of the Temple were second to none, that their almsgiving was munificent, that they never spared their blood in defence of the Cross; and were consumed the same evening by a slow fire of charcoal on the Island of the Seine. A contemporary poet and eyewitness thus describes the Christian death of the Grand Master:—

Pris l'ont por lier à l'estache;
Cil liez[1] et joiant s'i acorde;
les mains li lient d'une corde.
Mès ains leur dist; 'Seignors, au moins
'lessez-moi joindre un po mes mains,
'et vers Dieu fere m'oraison.

' . . mourir me convient brement,
'Diex set[2] qu' à tort et à pechié
's'en vendra en brief temps meschié[3]
'sus cels qui nous dampnent à tort;
'Diex en vengera nostre mort.'

En ceste guise fu desfet,[4]
Et si doucement la mort prist
Que chascuns merveillex en fist.

And so the chronicle—'sic paratum incendium prompto animo et volenti sustinuisse sunt visi, ut pro suae mortis constantia et abnegatione finali cunctis videntibus admirationem multam intulerint ac stuporem.'[5]

Clement V completed the ignominy of his conduct by

[1] joyfully (laetus). [2] sait. [3] mischief. [4] défait.
[5] Guill: de Nangis, *Continuatio.*

declaring the Order abolished, and handing over what remained of its possessions, or what remnant of that could be forced out of Philip's hands, to the Order of the Hospital.

No one doubts that the destruction of the Order of the Temple, carried out as it was, is one of the blackest crimes recorded in history. But the question whether the knights were wholly innocent is one which has never been settled. It may reasonably be concluded that, while the bulk of the accusations had as little foundation in truth as those alleged in trials for witchcraft, there was some foundation in fact for the belief that the Society had declined from its original purity. Hatred for the infidel had been tempered by admiration and respect for enemies as chivalrous as themselves; and they may have looked about for a *modus vivendi* with the Turks like that which was beginning to obtain on the Spanish border. Oriental mysticism and the doctrines of the Cathari and other sects (possibly in combination with Albigensian tenets) may have weakened Catholic orthodoxy; the destruction of the Christian power may have caused some of those to blaspheme who had devoted their lives to the service of the Cross, and had lost all their possessions in the East. Familiarity with Eastern forms of immorality had probably infected some of the knights, and enforced continence had taken its revenge in outrageous forms of vice, as in some of the monasteries suppressed by Henry VIII; the secret ceremonies of initiation may in some cases have been perverted to wicked purposes. What was alleged against the Templars as a body may be paralleled in the slander against the Jews, not yet wholly obsolete, and in the single instance of the Emperor Frederick II, against whom the accusations

brought against the Templars were repeated. We are tempted to think that in each case the home-staying world was dazzled by the brilliancy of travellers who were at home in every country, and who claimed, or seemed to claim, superiority on account of their larger experience of the world. In the case of the Emperor or the Order, a little flame of slander may easily become a conflagration: one brother boasting of his impiety or whispering hints of dark doings gives occasion to a hundred calumnies. What was true of some was soon believed of all. The lax tone of the Templars in general towards Mohamedans and their religion was magnified into infidelity and betrayal of Christianity; their loyalty to each other and to their Society into a compact to 'lie for the Order' and to prefer its interests to those of kings and nations and Christ himself; and secret ceremonies have always been an occasion of suspicion; for, if harmless, why should they be concealed?[1]

[1] The principal reasons for disbelieving the accusations against the Templars are these:—

1. The confessions were made under torture, or in fear of torture or death; and they were for the most part recanted.

2. Such confessions, though innumerable, are disbelieved in spite of all evidence in the case of trials for witchcraft.

3. Philip IV and Clement V had strong reasons for wishing the destruction of the Order. The Knights were wealthy and independent, and might be dangerous subjects.

4. Where no strong motive to press the inquiry existed, as in Portugal, England, Scotland, etc., the confessions were fewer in number.

5. Renegades would not be likely to spend their lives so freely in defence of a religion which they disbelieved.

On the other hand:—

1. Certain Knights lately received into the Order had left it; others had protested against the ceremonies of initiation; others (it is said) had mysteriously disappeared. There is a very close resemblance in the smallest details between the confessions which were taken in all parts of Europe: and torture was not employed except in France.

2. The Order kept its affairs very secret: and evil practices may grow up rapidly in a small society which has a strong esprit-de-corps; and the obligations of the members of such an Order to the Order itself will override all other considerations. It was said of both Templars and Hospitallers that their honour compelled them to lie for the Order if necessary.

These considerations in some degree account for the unpopularity of these new-comers, and the grave suspicions under which they fell. With King, Pope, clergy, nobles and people against them, how could they stand? We need not suppose that they were more chaste than the clergy, less greedy than the King, or less proud than the barons. They needed reform and reorganization under new conditions; or, in the last resort, an honourable dismissal and dissolution as having done their work. But the grosser abuses charged against them, if they existed at all, were exceptional; and it is incredible that so illustrious a body of men, with so lofty an ideal before them, and so great a tradition to preserve, can have suddenly and without cause degenerated into a horde of criminals worse than pirates, men-stealers and procurers, adding to their other crimes that of the most detestable hypocrisy.

It was believed that after the suppression of the Order, on each anniversary of it, the heads of seven of the martyred Templars rose from their graves. A phantom clothed in the red-cross mantle came into the churchyard and cried thrice, 'Who shall now defend the Holy Temple? Who shall free the Sepulchre of the Lord?' and the seven heads made answer, 'None! the Temple is destroyed.'

Another Order which deserves a special mention is that of the Teutonic Knights (*Teutschritter*)[1] founded at Jerusalem in 1190. The first title of this order was 'Brothers of the Hospital of the Blessed Virgin of Mount Sion:' they were, like the Hospitallers, pledged to the care of the sick, under the rule of St. Augustine and the

[1] Teutsche Ritter des Marien-Ordens.

statutes of the Hospital of St. John, to the Grand Master of which order they were subjected. The knightly part of their rule was borrowed from that of the Temple. Their habit was a white mantle and a black cross. They wore beards, like the Templars. Their rules were severe: those of them who were priests slept on straw pallets, and said mass in armour and sword at side. Candidates for the Order must be Germans, and in later times, of noble birth.

The Teutonic Order took its rise, according to tradition, from one of those chivalrous incidents which legend loves to invent or improve. Some merchants or gentlemen from Lübeck and Bremen, Heinrich Walpot von Bassenheim at their head, took pity on their countrymen who, lying wounded or sick with the plague in the camp before Acre, and knowing no language but their own, could not make their wants known to the French knights of St. John and the Temple (1190). They took the sails out of their ships, and made them into a tent, to protect the sick Germans from the heat of the sun. Forty persons of quality of the same nation formed themselves into a noble and charitable society, and became insensibly a new military order, taking their place by the side of the two more illustrious brotherhoods. After the capture of Acre by the kings of France and England in 1191, the Teutonic knights built there also a church and a hospital. The Order was confirmed by Pope Celestine III in the following year. The knights were to follow the rule of St. Augustine and observe the statutes of the Hospitallers for the service of the sick and the poor, and those of the Temple for military discipline. To this order none but Germans of noble birth could belong. Its

full title was 'The Order of the Teutonic Knights of St. Mary of Jerusalem.' The habit was a white mantle with a black cross. The knights took the three vows, and a fourth also, to devote their whole time to the service of the poor and sick, and the defence of the Holy Places.[1]

So long as the Christians maintained a hold upon Palestine, the three Orders—not without many quarrels—continued to fight against the Infidels. When Acre, the last Christian stronghold, had fallen (1291), and the Templars retired to their rich possessions in Europe, and the Hospitallers to Cyprus, to carry on their vow of eternal enmity to the Infidel, the Teutonic brotherhood transferred their head-quarters to Venice, where they had had a House since 1210. They soon found a new field for crusading.

The districts of Prussia, Livonia, Courland and Esthonia, were occupied at this time by tribes of savages, inhabitants of trackless bogs and fens, worshippers of monstrous idols, descendants of the heathen who had slain St. Adelbert in 997, and ready now to offer the crown of martyrdom to any Christians who came near them.

Unsuccessful attempts were made from time to time to convert the heathen of the Baltic lands; unsuccessful, because founded on no plan, and supported by no steady power. The history of the Crusades, it may be said the history of the Middle Ages, is a succession of generous and violent enterprises, thwarted by quarrels among those who took part in them. The evangelizers of Livonia, priests and merchants from Lübeck and Bremen, seemed to have

[1] Vertot, pp. 203, 204. (Engl. Tr., Edinburgh, 1770.)

more success; but the preaching of Meinhard, Bishop of Uxhüll, was forgotten after his death in 1196, and a few years later the pagan nobles burnt the town and church founded by the Christians.

There was already established in Livonia a religious order, the Brothers of the Sword (*Schwertbrüder, ordo Fratrum Militiæ Christi*); Innocent III took up their cause, and bade all the faithful who had intended to visit Rome redeem their vow by going on crusade in Livonia. To this end he confirmed by bull (1205) the institution of the Knights of the Sword, and by their means Christianity was by 1230 nominally established in Livonia, Esthonia, Semigallia and Courland.

The Teutonic knights entered into the labours of this Order. To reinforce them the Bishop of Prussia proposed to Hermann von der Salza, Master[1] of the Teutonic Order and one of the first statesmen of the day, that he should bring his brothers from Palestine to the Baltic lands. Hither then they removed (1228), still keeping their fortress of Montfort (Starkenberg) near Acre, as the headquarters of the Order, and built the grand fortresses of Marienburg and Königsberg,[2] pushing the frontier of civilization and Christianity eastward for two hundred years.

The Duke of Mazovia, on the north-western frontier of Poland and Lithuania, gladly accepted the help of the Teutonic chivalry; other brotherhoods joined them or

[1] Hochmeister, Teutschmeister.

[2] The accepted etymology of Königsberg is from Ottokar II, King of Bohemia. Prutz suggests that it is Montroyal, near the Dead Sea, and like Thorn, (Toron) Jerusalem, Emmaus, Goshen, a name imported by the knights from the East.

were absorbed by them. They bridged rivers, drained swamps and cleared forests, established bailiwicks (*Balleien*) and Commanderies (*Komthureien*) after the manner of the Templars and Hospitallers, and in fifty years after their migration Prussia was added to the Christian lands.

For many years the Crusaders devasted these unhappy regions. Death or conversion was the motto of the new Islam, and war went on without intermission, till fifty years of fire and sword had done their work, and the miserable inhabitants were baptized by force, yielded their lands to the invaders, and became their Helots. The Teutonic Order assumed the sovereignty of all the coast from the border of Pomerania to the Gulf of Riga, and remained in possession for two centuries.

It would be unjust to judge of their methods by a modern standard. The softening of the Frankish military spirit by the influence of Christianity, which is the essence of chivalry, was not effected without many deeds of violence. Armies in the field, whether Christian or heathen, are seldom merciful, and the military orders were always in the field. Whenever a barbarous or semi-barbarous race is inflamed by religious fury, such excesses are looked upon as zeal for the Lord, and justified by Biblical example. But apart from religion, the laws of war were cruel both at this time and for centuries later; and sentiment is wasted in condemning them.

Though the Teutonic knights conquered fiercely and ruled harshly, they brought order out of anarchy, and taught their savage subjects to reclaim wastes of fen

and marsh and forest, to till the land, to live in towns, and to keep the peace with German immigrants from civilized lands. These are the triumphs of civilization, the gains of a later age bought by the sufferings of those who first came in contact with the stronger race.

The beginning of the Prussian Crusade was in 1230, forty years after the establishment of the order under Waldpot. In 1234 Conrad, Landgrave of Thuringia and Hesse, seeing a woman of the town undergoing penance, was smitten with remorse. 'What is her sin to mine?' he exclaimed, and inspired by a sudden fervour of conscience he gave up his dominions, took the vows of the Order, and became one of its foremost knights. He became Grand Master, and after a life of good deeds was canonized. His brother's wife, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, dying at Marburg, her hospital there was given to the knights, and over her grave the noble church of St. Elizabeth was built, and her body enshrined in its *loculus* by the Emperor Frederick II.

The Teutonic knights extended their possessions over the country between the Memel and the Vistula; and in 1309 the seat of the Grand Master, who with those of the Temple and Hospital ranked among sovereign princes, was transferred from Venice to Marienburg.

By the beginning of the fifteenth century the Order had attained its greatest power and glory, reigning from the Order to the Gulf of Finland. But a disastrous defeat by the Poles and other Slavonic nations at Tannenberg in 1410 led to a loss of territory, and showed that the sword of the knights had lost its sharpness. They were obliged to trust to mercenaries, and were

unable to pay the mercenaries; two signs of decaying vigour. The doctrines of Wycliff and Huss caused dissension in the Order. Rebellions arose among their subjects. The Poles never ceased from troubling them, and in 1466 took from them Western Prussia. Now their headquarters were moved to Königsberg. Not long after (1498) their possessions in Sicily were taken away by Ferdinand the Catholic. The Teutonic Order had run its course; and in 1525 Albert of Brandenburg, the Grand Master, having embraced the doctrine of Luther, and finding that the knights in the various bailiwicks in Germany would not help him in a war with Poland, finally secularised the Order, as far as he could do so. resigned the title of Grand Master (1525), and receiving in exchange that of Hereditary Duke of Prussia, did homage to the king of Poland for the Duchy, confirmed the Lutheran knights in their possessions as feudal vassals of the Duchy, and left the rest of the knights to make what terms they could for their estates in all parts of Germany. The Catholic knights now met at Mergentheim (1527), and elected a new Grand Master. The Hohenzollerns have always made the best of both worlds. There is no more reason to doubt the sincerity of Albert's conversion than of Luther's counsel; but he exchanged a more shadowy though grander title for a substantial dominion under good protection. It was the time of the Diet of Worms, the Peasants' War, the sack of Rome, the divisions of Germany. What else could a practical man do?

This is the end of the Order as a reality. It continued to exist as an aristocratical institution, but with no

authority or power, till it was finally abolished by Napoleon in 1809.

Other orders of great fame were those of Calatrava (1158), Santiago (1175), and Alcántara (1212) in Spain. The history of all is the same; great prowess in war as long as the Crusades last: wealth, dignity, pride of birth, ending in mere heraldry and counting of quarterings. They served their time one by one, and sank into the ornaments of a court, preserving to the last something of their ancient military credit, but in other respects sinking into decrepitude, and furnishing a provision for the younger sons of noble families. The Knights of Malta alone remained worthy of their ancient glory, and deserved a better fate.

CHAPTER XI

INTERNATIONAL

Customs of chivalry not confined to any country—Frankish in origin—Early Teutonic consecration to arms—Knighthood common to all Christendom—The twelve Peers of Charlemagne—Arthur; the Cid—Knight-errantry—Bertrand de Born—The romances—Pilgrimages—Royal and noble marriages—Influence of the Church—Crusades—Chaucer's Knight—Quests and Vows—Tournaments—Order of the Garter—Golden Fleece—International courtesy—Equality in knighthood—English custom—Marriage of princes with subjects—Disparagation—Foreign knights at Windsor Round Table—Feudal tenure of lands over seas.

As chivalry was common to all Christendom, so its laws and customs belonged to Christendom, not to this or that nation. The military ascendency of the Franks gave a Frankish colour to chivalry, and set the pattern to the knighthood of other nations: and in the Crusades, where all Europe came together as a universal tilting-ground, the idea of a common bond of knighthood was prominent.

From the earliest times of which Teutonic and Gallic records contain any memory, consecration to arms was symbolized by girding the young warrior with a sword. All those who were so girt were equal in chivalry, and were implicitly bound to like vows. When they travelled to foreign countries they found a home in chivalry, as in Holy Church. This unity was not a mere convention; it was a reality, and was understood in war and peace, in the same way as the unwritten law of nations is binding in our own

time. A knight was a member of an order analogous to the order of priesthood: the priest was vowed to preach, and the knight to defend the Catholic doctrines in every part of the world.[1] The secular sacrament of chivalry, like the religious sacrament of Orders, set apart a class of men for certain offices, and dedicated them above and apart from other men in a kind of nobility or gentleness. As the Popes promoted clerks of different nations to serve churches in every part of Christendom, so the military orders were divided into Tongues or Nations, foreign knights were admitted to the Round Tables of sovereigns, and knighthood was granted to men of gentle birth without respect of nations.[2] Among the names of the fabulous peers of Charlemagne, the 'Dosepiers' or twelve paladins, are Richard of Normandy, Ogier the Dane, Howell of Wales, Guy of Burgundy, Guy of Warwick, Gandeboys of Frisia, Naquels of Bavaria;[3] and in historical times it was the glory of a prince to gather round him soldiers of fortune from all countries. The courts of chivalrous kings were frequented by the sons of foreign nobles, sent there to be trained in arms and courtesy.

Arthur's court at Camelot is an ideal picture, but drawn at least in part from familiar models. Malcolm IV, King of Scots, was knighted by Henry II of England, at the seige of Toulouse (1159). The army which conquered England in 1066 was 'a motley host from every part of

[1] Ste. Palaye, Part II., note 34, *Office de Chevalerie est de maintenir la foi catholique.*

[2] Ste. Palaye, Part II., note 12. *The Sowdone of Babylon.*

France.'[1] The armies of the Cid were full of foreign adventurers. The warriors who helped Cnut to conquer England had served the Moors of Spain; his English subjects followed him in his Scandinavian wars; and the English who fled from him took service in the Varangian guard at Constantinople. These instances come from a time when chivalry was only in the making: but they shew the natural tendency of the institution, and have therefore more force than instances drawn from later times, when every camp was full of knights from all corners of the Christian world.

Knight-errantry, the quest of adventure for its own sake, was among the first traditions of chivalry. Whatever may have been the practice in an age in which travelling was difficult and dangerous, when every sea was beset by rovers, and every forest by outlaws, and when robber knights and barons rode down from their castles to spoil shipmen faring on the river, or travellers on the roads, or shut them up in their castles to be held for ransom, to ride in search of adventure was part of a knight's *devoir*. Among the duties of a knight is reckoned

estre grant voyagier,
tournoiz suir, et jouster pour s'amie.

His absence from home is explained;—

en autre tere est allé tournoyant.

Froissart describes as the right estate of a knight to be able 'bien chevir et gouverner du sien, et servir son seigneur selon son état, et chevaucher par les pays, pour avancer son corps et son honneur.'[2]

Henry, the eldest son of Henry II, is described by

[1] J. R. Green, *The Conquest of England*, p. 568. [2] I. 165

Bertrand de Born as 'the best jouster and man-at-arms since Roland,' because he had ridden for three years as an 'adventurer' over many lands and borne away the prize at all tournaments.[1] The words *errer*, *chercher* and *quête* are used with this meaning. In all the romances the knights ride to all parts of the world, without regard for geography. Babylon (Cairo), Damascus, Byzant, are as familiar names as Rome and Spain. Change of scene is almost the only change in the monotony of knightly adventure, where giants, enchanters, dragons, lions, and knights, blue, red, and black, are encountered and slain in never-ending succession. The knight-errant is known by by being armed and clothed in green,[2] the colour of spring and hope. Thus, to take a few instances out of many, William of Palerne visits Rome, Spain, Greece, and Italy: Guy of Warwick fights and jousts in Normandy and as far East as the land of the Emperor. Arthur fights with Romans, Allemans, and Gauls. Sir Ipocras of Brittany is involved in adventures at Rome with the King of Babylon's son.

The custom of the pilgrimages, which themselves followed the lines of trade, combined with many other causes to unite Europe. All roads led to Rome. Alfred, Athelstan, Cnut, Charles the Great, and innumerable other princes worshipped *ad limina Apostolorum:* Fulk of Anjou, Robert of Normandy, the father of William the Conqueror, William of Angoulême, Sweyn Godwinsson, Ealdred of York, Siegfried of Mentz, are a few of the many who visited the Holy Sepulchre before the Crusades. Royal marriages,

[1] Diez. p. 204. [2] Ste. Palaye, v., Note 7, p. 8.

too, brought nations into contact with each other. Emma of Normandy prepared England for the Conquest. Matilda of England helped to civilize Scotland. Constance of Aquitaine, consort of Robert I of France, brought with her into France and Burgundy 'vain and light people' (troubadours no doubt among them), whose courtly manners and showy dress scandalised the Frankish warriors;[1] and thereby helped to unite Northern with Southern France. Eleanor of Poitou imported troubadours' songs into England, and brought about a revolution in our native literature and customs. With another Eleanor, the wife of Henry III, came in not only ecclesiastics, greedy for English benefices, but also a swarm of knights and ladies from Provence, Poitou, and Savoy, the flower of French chivalry, who made the court of England at once the most wasteful and the most splendid and cultivated in Europe, next to that of Frederick II.

The intrusion of foreign ecclesiastics into English benefices; the invasion of the Universities by Franciscans and Dominicans, using the universal language of the Christian Church, and teaching a scholasticism which had no national colour; the frequent use and abuse of appeals to Rome at the time when the Papacy was at its greatest height of power; the impulse given to trade by the Crusades; the Roman lawyers brought into England and Spain by Edward I and Alphonso the Wise, all worked in the same direction; and the international character of chivalry is but one of many causes which gave some reality to the idea of Christendom as a brotherhood of nations.

[1] Radulfus Glaber.

Thus the notion of knights questing to the ends of the earth, so common in mediæval romance, had its origin in an extended conception of travel, a conception confined till the 11th century to pilgrims, Danish rovers, and Mussulman conquerors.

The Crusades turned this fancy into fact, or perhaps gave rise to the romantic traditions of questing. The younger son of crusading times did not ask for his portion of goods, but for leave to go and seek his fortunes. The commonplace of the fairy tales comes from life—'Beau Sire, baillez-moi hommes suffisans pour me faire estat ou royaume'—'Beau fils, aurez ce que vous demandez.'[1] Gerard of Bidaforte, an Englishman, took the Cross, not to save his soul, but to find an heiress: but the lady of his choice preferred Raymond of Toulouse. Gerard consoled himself by becoming a Templar, and rose to be Grand Master. In the camps at Acre and Ascalon knights from all Europe met, and learnt from each other respect for the common bonds, and (it may be) some glimmerings of the 'courtesy of nations.' Such feelings indeed were as yet in their infancy. Bohemund and Raymond quarrelled bitterly about the Holy Lance. Richard I and Philip Augustus hardly abstained from bloodshed; and Richard was imprisoned by Leopold of Austria without regard for the tie of knighthood or the Cross which both had taken: but speaking generally, in spite of frequent discords, the Crusades provided a field of common action on which knights, sent from various lands, learnt to recognize each other.

[1] Michaud, *Robert le Frison.*

The custom of travel, begun or fostered by the Crusades, took root. The roads were opened, and the knights posted along them. Chaucer's knight[1] had served 'as wel in Cristendom as hethenesse.'

> At Alisandre[2] he was whan it was wonne,
> Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord[3] bygonne
> Aboven alle naciouns in Pruce.[4]
> In Lettowe hadde reyced and in Ruse,
> No cristen man so ofte of his degre.
> In Gernade[5] atte siege hadde he be
> Of Algesir, and riden in Belmarie.
> At Lieys[6] was he, and at Satalie,[7]
> Whan they were wonne.

Galeazzo of Mantua[8] vowed in gratitude to Joanna, Queen of Naples (c. 1360), who had allowed him to dance with her, that he would travel about the world till he could present her with two knights conquered in battle. His travels led him to France, Spain, England, Germany, and Hungary. A quest was always supposed: it might be to rescue a lady, to find a missing knight, to meet with a worthy adversary, (like Count Robert of Paris (1079), who had never been so fortunate) to plant a banner on a certain tower, to bring home a tale of Saracens' heads or Moorish prisoners, or the portraits of thirty ladies whose lovers the quester had vanquished. The Templars, Hospitallers, Teutonic knights, and knights of Compostella, welcomed all such adventurers, and noble youths of spirit joined their ranks in the same spirit as that which led the

[1] *Canterbury Tales*, *Prologue* 51. [2] Alexandria (1365).
[3] Fr. *behourde*, in the jousts: see Chap. v, p. 107.
[4] Prussia, Lithuania, Russia; in the wars of the Teutonic knights.
[5] Granada, Algeciras (1344). [6] Layas in Armenia (1367).
[7] Attalia (1352).
[8] Brantôme, *Dames illustres de France* p. 375. (Ste. Palaye II., 58.)

Veres and Dalgettys to engage in the Palatinate wars, centuries later.

Such a quest continued conventionally for a year and a day; and among these opportunities for adventure may be reckoned the tournaments which took the place of the race-meetings and royal visits of our own day. Knights coming to tournament were splendidly welcomed and nobly rewarded. In *Sir Tryamour* the jousts are cried half a year in advance to summon the knights

> of every londe the best;
> Knyghtys of divers londys
> When they harde of this tythandys[1]
> they gysed[2] them fulle gay.
>
> Thedur they rode withowten reste;
> . . . mekylle was the chivalry
> . . . that then come to Hungary.

When Sir Tryamour is made Knight he says—

> To other londys will I spere,[1]
> more of awntars[3] for to here,
> and who dothe best in dede.

A good knight may be pressed to enter a new service, as happened to Fulk FitzWarin (c. 1100), who after quarrelling with King John and renouncing his allegiance served Philip of France (under the assumed name of Olivier du Bois) and won praise for valour and good fellowship.

The announcement of a tournament was 'to all comers,' or 'à cel aventureux venu novellement,'[4] and in the most showy if not the most palmy age of chivalry such opportunities were offered at every royal or noble wedding or coronation, as well as at the meetings of princes in peace and war. At a tournament held by Charles and Lewis

[1] Tidings. [2] Dressed. [3] Adventures.

[4] Cuvelier, *Du Guesclin* v. 504.

sons of Lewis the Pious (875), French, German, Saxon, Lombard and English champions are said to have competed. Open house was held. Fulk FitzWarin turned the king's highway so as to pass through his hall, that all knights who travelled questing along it might share his hospitality.[1] William (in the same story) made cry in many lands[2] that all knights of valour who would tourney for love should come on the next Feast of St. Michael to Castle Peveril which is in Peak, and joust for the hand of Melette of Blanche Tower and her lands and honour of Blanchevile.[3] When Edward III founded the Order of the Garter he invited knights of all countries to joust at Windsor, and dine at his Round Table in the new tower, 'la Rose,' and granted them safe conduct; and among those whom he created knights—though the circumstances of the time (1346-9) indicate that the institution of the Order was an English challenge to French chivalry—are numbered the Captal de Buch ('Piers Capitow de la Bouch'), Sanchet d'Abrichecourt (two of the 'founders'), Robert of Namur, Guichard d'Angle, John, Duke of Brittany, James, Earl of Douglas, and Francis Van Halle. In the succeeding reigns we meet with names from Gascony, France, Almaine, Burgundy and Apulia. The Order of the Star, founded as a Round Table, and in rivalry with the Garter, by Philip of Valois (1351), was also open to knights of all lands, who were to meet once a year and recount all

[1] Wright, *Fulk FitzWarin* p. 320.

[2] Lors fit Willan une crie en meynte, tere en meynte cité, qe tus les chevalers de valours qe torneier veilent pur amurs, etc.

[3] *i.e.* Whittington, in Shropshire.

their adventures, good and bad. Among the knights of the Golden Fleece (founded in 1429), whose banners are hung up in the church of St. Bavon at Ghent, the first name is that of our Edward IV.

International courtesy may be a hollow thing, a pretence of goodwill between enemies. Each party seeks its own profit with little regard for justice or generosity. So in war, the business of each is to harm and kill his enemy: but it is allowed in the interests of the human race that war should have rules and checks upon savagery; and in the same way it is well that the intercourse of nations should proceed by rule of courtesy. The rules of modern international procedure are ultimately derived from the courtesies of heralds, which occupy a large space in the customs of chivalry; or, if this is too much to say, the idea that courtesy between nations is a convention worth maintaining comes from chivalry.

Another aspect of this international character is the acknowledgment of equal nobility and gentility throughout Europe. Hence the obligation of courtesy: all knights were brothers. A soldier who had once been admitted to the estate of knighthood was thereby made equal in blood to the noblest gentleman. It was held that if a gentleman had to surrender to a churl he should make his captor a knight.[1] In most countries gentle blood was a necessary condition of knighthood: but in England where, even before the Conquest, the churl who throve became thane-worthy, men of humble birth might in rare instances be

[1] Mills, *History of Chivalry*, Vol. I., Chap. iv. This was done by the Earl of Suffolk when vanquished by William Renaud.

admitted as knights. As the son of the churl might become a bishop, so he might become a judge or lord mayor of London, and wear the golden spurs like any Scrope or de Vere. In the ballad of *Edward IV and the Tanner of Tamworth*, 'A collar, a collar,'[1] the King did cry . . . . 'Lo here I make thee the best esquire,'—and Henry V says at Agincourt:[2]

> 'He to-day that sheds his blood with me
> Shall be my brother: be he ne'er so vile,
> This day shall gentle his condition.'

In this, as in the recruiting of the peerage from lower ranks, the English custom was consistent, though not governed by rule. There never was a royal caste, a noble caste, or a gentle caste in England: but the English knight or baro once made was accepted as such in all countries; and the rules which prescribe a certain number of quarterings are but the device of heralds, and have no foundation in reality, so far as our country is concerned.

These fancies were, however, ultimately adopted as a heraldic convention in England as well as in other countries; and the heralds assumed and exercised a dominion which was not acknowledged by lawyers, however it may have been sanctioned by royal grants and by popular acceptance. Though 'disparagation' was looked upon as an injury,[3] and sovereigns and lords as a rule married their

[1] *King Henry* V, iv. 3.

[2] *i.e.* a Collar of SS., the badge of an Esquire's estate. See also the ballad *Glasgerion*:—

> 'He cast a collar upon his neck;
> He seemed a gentleman.'

[3] *Articles of the Barons*, 1215. (Stubbs, *Select Charters*, p. 282), 'heredes ita maritentur ne disparagentur'—*Dictum de Kenilworth* (1266), 'habeant custodiam heredum cum maritagiis sine disparagatione' (Ibid., p. 413).

wards to noblemen and gentlemen of their own rank, this was from regard to the inheritance of lands rather than on account of any essential difference of blood. It was never law in England, as in France and Germany, that marriage must be among equals. Instances of the squire of low degree and the lady of low degree occur in the highest rank. The House of Cerdic made alliances principally with the daughters of English thanes. King John married a Clare: his daughter Eleanor, Simon de Montfort; Edmund Crouchback of Lancaster, Aveline of Albemarle; two of the daughters of Edward III married English noblemen; Thomas of Woodstock, a Bohun; Woodvilles, Greys, Neviles, Staffords, Beauchamps, de Burghs, Glendowers, Tudors, Percys, de la Poles, Courtenays, are among the royal alliances of Plantagenet times; and the tradition has been carried down to the present date in the names of Seymour, Howard, Hyde, Walpole, Luttrell, Campbell, and Duff. In the same way the nobles of England have never thought it unworthy of their dignity to intermarry with the untitled gentry.

The international character of Heralds' Colleges has always upheld the contrary doctrine. Here too the French tradition has been powerful. In the statutes of the Garter it is laid down that no Companion can be admitted to the Order unless 'generis ac militiae nomine dignus'—all *ignobiles* and *improbi* are to be excluded. These statutes, however, date from the reign of Edward IV, the original statutes having been lost; and though simple knights, such as Sir Sanchet d'Aubrichecourt, Sir Philip de la Vache, and many English knights bachelor, such as Sir Edward Wale, and other

'Founders,' were Companions of the Order, it came before long to be restricted almost entirely to English noblemen of high rank, and foreign princes. Sir Robert Walpole is the only commoner knight since Plantagenet times, though the blue riband was offered to Peel and other statesmen. Frederick Ubaldi, Duke of Urbino (1444—1482), whose portrait in Garter robes was exhibited in London some years ago, reported to his cousin Pope Sixtus IV that 'it is with great difficulty that any but kings and persons of royal lineage are admitted to the Order.' Political reasons have modified, in recent times, the exclusiveness of the principal orders. The Order of the Annunziata, all Companions of which are 'cousins' of the King of Italy, as head of the House of Savoy, has in our own times been conferred upon a French marshal. The Duke of Wellington was knight of almost all the orders of Europe; and generally speaking, though the higher grades of the several orders are seldom given to foreigners other than princes, the lower grades are not confined to subjects of the sovereign.

To sum up: chivalry, like feudalism, took little account of native and foreign. Both institutions are connected with rank and land tenure, not with national difference. The King of Scots was vassal to the King of England, the King of England of the King of France for Guienne and Normandy; the Count of Brittany to the King of England, as Duke of Normandy; an English noble like Bruce and Balliol did homage to Scotland for Scottish estates; a foreign prince might be at once vassal and liege-lord to a brother sovereign. And in like manner knighthood was given and received without regard to nationality, until the growth of monarchical

power in all countries weakened feudalism and severally unified the nations of Christendom.[1]

Chivalry may not have played a great part in this development, but the beginnings of international courtesy are due to it. Knighthood was a bond of union, and was conferred without the restriction of a common nationality; the parole of a captive knight was accepted without hesitation, solely on consideration of his knighthood; the rules and customs of chivalry were identical in all Christendom, and were respected in all wars; and the very unreality of knightly courtesies, which made war something of a game, gave it a colour of mutual kindness and softened the military spirit.

[1] See Chapter on *Ceremony*.

SCENES FROM THE CORONATION OF CHARLES VII. 1. BLESSING OF THE ORIFLAMME. 2. PRINCES VESTING THE KING. 3. CORONATION.— Cott. Tiber. B viii.

[*Face page 281.*

CHAPTER XII

POSITION OF WOMEN

What was the position of women?—Ideals of Petrarch and Boccaccio —Women in classical times—Reappearance of that type in 13th cent: —Questions raised, What was the nature of the homage, how received by ladies, and what virtues did it foster—Monogamy essential—Harem degrades both sexes—Greek convention—Roman—Christian—Acceptance of Roman custom by barbarians—Women and the Church—Sympathy of celibate clergy—Discipline of Church needed to counteract gallantry of chivalry—Teutonic women—Norse, &c.—Instances of noble womanhood—Franks—Gaul and Britain—Marriage among Celts and Teutons—Divorce forbidden by the Church—Normans accepted Church rule—Earlier relation of sexes, good or bad, had been natural; now became artificial and conscious—New sentiment—Comparison of ancient with mediæval types—Womanly conduct—free language, licentious practice—Instances—Innocence and ignorance—Mediæval conception of love—Honour, love, and jealousy—Feudal custom opposed to chivalric sentiment.

THE question 'what was the estimation of women according to the rule or custom of chivalry?' is one not easily answered, if indeed it admits of an answer at all. It is easy to say that the ideal was different from the reality, and that a high conception of female virtue and manly devotion went side by side in practice with licence and brutality. But if we take the ideal alone, apart from the comment of facts, the ladies of Petrarch and Dante are very different from those of Boccaccio or the fabliaux.[1] It is not a question of good or bad women, of which every age provides examples in fact

[1] See Hallam, *Literature of Europe* i. 134.

and in fiction. It is a question of ideals. Boccaccio's conception of what a woman should be, though it may include such types as Constance, Griselda, and the Lady of the Falcon, has room also for Fiammetta; and there is no suggestion of blame in the picture given by him of a society which was cultivated to the highest degree of refinement—for no age has ever surpassed, if any has equalled, the refinement of that which conceived the figures of Beatrice in the *Vita Nuova*, Francesca and Piccarda in the *Comedy*, or Yseult and Berthe, and which inspired Giotto, Memmi, and Mino da Fiesole—and yet accepted a rule of manners as licentious as that set forth by La Fontaine in his *Contes et Nouvelles*. The idealizing of women is the result of chivalry; nor can there be much doubt as to the lax morality which accompanied it. The problem does not present itself in other times, unless it be in Periclean Athens, where Aristophanes jostles Euripides, and Plato himself, the highest of moralists, confounds moralists by his treatment of sexual relations. The great ladies of Roman history and fiction, though exalted, are not attractive, and the Cinaras and Lesbias of the poets are merely pictures of the toys with which men amuse themselves. A better and a more modern type is found in some of those who live in the pages of Tacitus, in the women who corresponded with St. Jerome (though asceticism makes havoc of their graces) and generally in the times when paganism was giving place to Christianity, in the fourth and fifth centuries. We pass over the Middle Ages, and we find among the contemporaries of More, Sidney, Shakespeare, Spenser, and Herrick, both in reality and in fiction, a new type, unaffected and virtuous, and yet full of grace and

refinement of feeling, if not of speech; women who, if they lived among us now, would be at home in all the courtesies of modern life, neither highflown and unreal, nor coarse and licentious in thought.

Between these two comes a period in which the relation between men and women was at once more passionate and more conventional, more licentious and more controlled by rule than at any other.

There never was a time when women were more frequently made the subject of verse, nor worshipped with greater devotion, than the age of chivalry; nor, to judge from history and literature, were less worthy of the homage which they received; and we must enquire what was the nature of that homage, what the reasons for it, how it was received, and what were the virtues corresponding to it, before we can judge rightly what was in fact the ideal position of women from the 10th to the 15th century; a time in which it was the duty and pleasure of every gentleman to be the slave of some lady, and when the passion of love was studied more ardently, and expressed in more delicate and sincere language than at any other time.

Without attempting to go back far into the darkness of origins, we may lay down a general rule that respect for women is only found in a society in which monogamy is the rule. The harem system degrades both men and women. The rivalry of wives and concubines, the facility of divorce, and the miserable condition of the wife who has ceased to please her husband, destroy family life and make the sultana of the moment no more than a dignified slave. Instances to the contrary appear here and there, when a woman of

strong character has been able to rise above her position and maintain her ascendency, such as those of the wives of Persian, Egyptian and Hebrew kings, Xenophon's Panthea, the 'virtuous women' of Plutarch, the Hecuba and Andromache of Homer, where personal character, helped by royal state, preserves royal dignity. But these are only exceptions to the rule.

Among the Greeks the institution of slavery gave men complete licence outside the conventional restraint of marriage. It was the duty of a Greek to marry and bring up sons and daughters to serve his city. But whilst the lawful wife was kept in a kind of Oriental seclusion, the husband might contract *liaisons* with his domestic slaves and other women, bond or free, without much loss of character, provided that he respected the wives of his neighbours. In early times this was freely acknowledged. Penelope bears no grudge against Ulysses for his amours with Circe and Calypso; Agamemnon and Achilles make no secret of their love for Briseis; who, for her part, is handed over from one master to another without a word of comment.[1] The vengeance of Clytaemnestra is rather on account of the sacrifice of her daughter than the infidelity of her husband. At Sparta, in historical times, a nobler tradition prevailed, and in the works of the tragic poets of Athens and of Xenophon there is some conception of purer morals, lax though the common practice may have been.

A better sentiment obtained in Rome, from the ancient

[1] Capture in war levelled all ranks. Andromache, Hecuba, Cassandra, serve at the loom and the well. Helen (perhaps because of her divine birth) is the only exception. In the time of the Peloponnesian war Lysias speaks of an Athenian citizen who did not like to show his ankles because he had worked in chains as a prisoner at Megara.

legends of Lucretia and Cloelia throughout the history of the Republic and the Empire. Even in the worst times the College of Vestals symbolised in theory and practice an ideal of womanly purity and dignity; and Christian morality, carrying on historically the traditions of Palestine, in which, monogamy was universal since the return of the Jews from captivity, found in Rome a more congenial soil for the growth of domestic virtue than in the East, where popular licence called out its opposite, extreme asceticism. The barbarians, when they overflowed the Empire, found a strict rule of marriage which protected the persons and property of women by the arm of the law and spiritual censures; and combined or contrasted with it, a fully developed ecclesiastical and monastic system opposed to all irregular intercourse, allowing no commerce between the sexes, no divorce or re-marriage without the sanction of the Church, a sanction sparingly granted. The history of the Dark Ages and the early Middle Ages is a history of the struggle between pagan usage and Christian rule, in which the ecclesiastical power asserted itself more and more through the beneficent organization of the Roman Church, till the Papal power culminated in the 13th century. The resultant of these two forces, the one a tradition of lawless violence, derived from centuries of savage or barbarous life, the other an organised plan of civil society under religious direction, is the morality of the Middle Ages, in which chivalry played so large a part for good and evil.

We must distinguish between the affected idolatry which was enjoined by the customs of chivalry and the equality which was upheld by the Church. Gallantry at once exalted

and debased womankind; and, being disconnected from morals, was antagonistic to the Church. The position held by the Church was simple, consistent, uncompromising, and strictly moral. If we admit that there was a tinge of sentiment in the protection always accorded to women by a celibate clergy, and that scandals were common among them, this does not detract from the general sincerity and purity of their motives. The doctrine of the spiritual equality of women, the dignity of the cloister, the sanctity of marriage, and the rules of consanguinity and affinity, divorce and re-marriage, though they may have been perverted to ambitious purposes and worked in with a tyrannical system of priest-craft, nevertheless were powerful engines to raise the condition of women, and to make men look upon them as something better than slaves or ministers of pleasure. The more barbarous were the manners of men, the stronger was the bond of sympathy between women and the clergy, who found in them more piety, more reflection, and more capability of culture than in the unlettered soldiers whose business was war, and who sought their relaxation in drunkenness and debauchery. The patronage of literature (it has been said) passed into the hands of women.

The intellectual superiority of the clergy to the laity is shown by the fact that the chancellors, justiciars, and treasurers of the Middle Ages are for the most part not soldier nobles, but clerks or lawyers; drawn from the middle classes or the lower gentry, and educated in monasteries or universities, not at the courts of princes. The nobles were too ignorant and idle to attend to politics. The work of civilization was left to priests and scholars. And the priests,

from Jerome to Caponsacchi, were and are the friends of women. In no department of life was this superiority asserted with more advantage to Christendom than in the regulation of marriage and the defence of women's rights. The courts of Charles II and Catherine de Medicis, in in which duels and intrigues were the serious business of life, are the natural outcome of the principles of chivalry, disconnected from morals and undisciplined by the Church. The system of the Catholic Church maintained not only a power wnich contended with secular potentates for the practical government of the world, but also an ideal of morality which held its own against the fantastic and artificial fashions of chivalry.

From the faint echoes of Teutonic antiquity, reaching us principally through the unscientific reports of Romans who visited their country in war, we have derived the idea of a chaste and vigorous nation, by whom women were respected and honoured. There would seem also to be a kind of sanctity ascribed to them. The ideal (as far as anything can be asserted about it) appears to have been that of a Boadicea 'standing loftily charioted', cheering on the brave and driving cowards back to war, of a nurse tending the wounded, or of a Sibyl with a message from the gods. 'The rest of the sex' (to quote Gibbon, to whose description of the ancient Germans—a digest of Tacitus[1]—nothing can be added) . . . 'were respected as the free and equal companions of soldiers; associated . . . to a life of toil, of danger, and of

[1] The form in which the Norse and Icelandic sagas are presented is mediæval, whilst the substance is ancient. But 700 years of tradition, silent to us, separate Tacitus from the earliest Eddas.

glory. The Germans lived for honour; and the honour of women is chastity.'

It is not denied that the drudgery of house and field work fell principally upon the women, and that female slaves as well as male were subjected to the caprice and cruelty of their masters. All that can be said is that women were not regarded as merely part of the stock on the farm, like negroes in America, and that in certain cases they enjoyed a high consideration.

The Scandinavian legends tell much the same story.[1] The wives of chieftains are great ladies who live with their lords and their lord's friends, much as Helen and Penelope live among the chiefs of Peloponnesus and Ithaca, or Helen MacGregor in her clan. And how dignified such a condition may be we are reminded by Scott.[2]

Where the men's main occupation is war, the women are warlike too.[3] The brides of the Vikings, the goddesses and Valkyries of the Northern Sagas are as ferocious as their lords. Where the community is peaceful, as in the plains of North Germany and in England, a softer type of womankind is found. Neither the savage nor the domestic type owes anything to Christian rules or chivalric fashions. There is more love than gallantry, more respect than homage; and on the other hand the Teutonic women of the ages preceding chivalry have more dignity than grace, more morals than manners. Women are not regarded as the equals of men,

[1] Chapter IX.

[2] See *Rob Roy* and *Waverley*.

[3] 'Never shall the maidens mock these my sons at the games, and cry out that they fear death.' (W. Morris, *Volsungs and Niblungs*, p. 11.)

still less as their superiors. The relation between the sexes is natural and simple; a good woman is treated with reverence and kindness because she is good, not because she is a woman: and no considerations of courtesy save a murderess, an adulteress or a virago from brutal punishment at the hands of her kinsmen. But both in literature and in history, examples are not rare among women of high dignity and influence. Women play a larger part in the Northern Epics than in the corresponding age of Greece; and they would not have been capable of taking the position accorded to them by the Church if their training in Pagan times had not made them worthy of it. Such figures as Bertha, the first Christian princess in England, St. Etheldreda, St. Hilda, Ethelburga of Wessex, Ethelfleda of Mercia, are not produced by accident.

Any consideration which may have been paid to women as such, extended no further than to the families of the free-born. The women slaves of Ulysses were looked upon as the slaves in an eastern harem, and their misconduct with the suitors of Penelope exposed them to cruel vengeance at the hands of their master when he returned. Among the Britons, if a chief died suddenly, the women might be tortured. Viking songs tell with savage glee of the capture of slaves, and how the hands of the women were bound with hard knots. Gudrun, the wife of Sigurd the dragon-slayer, is taken in war, like Andromache, and given to 'the duke's high dame' to bind her shoon, and is mocked and lashed by her mistress.

The Normans, who if not the inventors of chivalry, accepted it into their ideas and helped to make it current,

were the descendants of the Vikings, and inherited their daring enterprise, their seriousness and courage, not unmixed with savagery. The Norse Eddas contain a chronicle of horrors hardly equalled by those of 'Thebes and Pelops' line,' but in the midst of all a noble though not attractive ideal of womanhood, steadfast, courageous, and of tragic dignity, makes itself felt. Brynhild the Valkyrie, who, like the Pleiad Maia, has lost her divinity and must share the lot of mortals, will never wed one who knows the name of fear. The tragedy of her life is the discovery that her husband Gunnar,[1] Sigurd's blood-brother, has won her by the help of Sigurd the dragon-slayer, who alone of the heroes is worthy of her. But she will not listen to the wooing of Sigurd—'Two men in one house I will not have'—and when at length she and Sigurd are placed side by side on the bale-pyre to be burnt along with five bondswomen and eight bondsmen, whose ghosts are to serve them in the netherworld, the picture is one of Homeric grandeur. But the details are horrible. Hogni destroys his victims in the fire that burnt amidst the hall. Atli cuts his heart out while he laughs at the pain. Gunnar, Brynhild's husband, is cast into a 'worm-close' to be devoured by serpents. Gudrun, who becomes the prize of Atli after Sigurd's death, cuts the throats of her two sons and mingles their blood in her husband Atli's beaker; then she murders Atli himself in his bed with the help of Niblung, Hogni's son. Swanhild, her daughter by Sigurd, is trodden under foot by horses. Gudrun's sons cut off the hands and feet of her murderer, and are stoned by his men.

[1] The Gunther of the *Nibelungenlied*; Atli (Attila) is Etzel.

The Frankish women are of the same type, as the Franks were among the fiercest of barbarians. To them belong the stories of Fredegunde and Brunehilde; but Clotilda of Burgundy and Bertha the wife of Ethelbert, were also Frankish princesses, as well as the mythical Bertha 'aux grans piés.'

The earliest accounts of Gaulish and British women give a similar picture of lofty but savage womanhood. The Celtic women in the Roman records are brave and chaste. The Cimbrians at the battle of Campi Raudii put their women behind their line of warriors, *hortamenta victoriae vel pulsis pudorem.*[1] When captured they ask to be made the slaves of the Vestal virgins, in order to preserve their chastity. Chiomara, wife of Ortiagon or Orgiagon, chief of the Gaulish Tectosages, slew the centurion who had outraged her, and brought his head to her husband, declaring that 'no two living men should boast that they had possessed her.'[2] Cartismandua, queen of the Brigantes in Britain,[3] led her troops in war like Boadicea the Icenian, and made war and peace.

Among all these tribes marriage was held in high honour. Though women were bought and sold[4] for so many head of cattle, they were, once married, the companions, not the slaves of their husbands. Many Gaulish sepulchral inscriptions are dedicated 'coniugi incomparabili,' 'coniugi optimæ,' and so on. The wife in Beowulf is called 'peace-weaver' (freou-webbe); she keeps the king's hoard and has the charge of the house keys: she may not be beaten by her

[1] Tac. *Hist.* iv 18. [2] Livy xxxviii, 24; Polyb. 6, xxi, 38; Plutarch, *De mulierum virtutibus.* [3] Tac. *Hist*: iii, 45. [4] Gif man mæ gebigeo (If a man buys a maid).

lord. The Northman's wife, too, bears the house keys. Her 'morning-gift' acknowledges her position in the family. The Salic law contains enactments for the protection of women. Women sit at meat with the nobles and share with them the ale and mead, but leave the hall when the men begin to drink deep. The maidens serve the ale-cup.[1]

It is not easy to draw the due distinction between lawful polygamy and promiscuous intercourse. Among the Celtic and Teutonic nations monogamy was the common practice: but polygamy was not unknown, especially among the Danes and Northmen, the Irish and Highland clans, and perhaps the Britons; divorce was easy, and no law regulated the relations of a master to his female thralls. As soon as those nations were converted to Christianity, the Church assumed the regulation of morals. Monogamy was insisted upon, divorce and re-marriage became more difficult; concubinage, though it could not be abolished, ceased to be lawful. The influence of the Church in the gradual abolition of slavery, raised the standard of feeling in regard to women; and as we have already pointed out, women found in the cloister at once a refuge from violence and a sphere of influence. The nuns of England were often high-born women, skilled in the needlework (*aurifrisium*)[2] which was the pride of our country, trained too in book-learning. Their nunneries were homes of refinement and learning, as we may see from the letters of St. Boniface (Winifred of

[1] dóhtor Hrógares
eorlum on ende
ealu-wæge bær—(*Beowulf*, 4047.)

[2] *Aurifrisium* (whence *orfrey*) was a costly kind of embroidery enriched with gold and silver thread and precious stones. A specimen of it, from the tomb of Ethelbert, is preserved at Durham.

Crediton) to Eadburge, and other holy women, which resemble those of St. Jerome to Paulla and Eustochium. Not unlike these English cloisters were the *gynaecea*[2] of Germany, in which a spark of the Carlovingian renaissance was kept burning by nuns and other learned ladies, among whom the dramatic poetess Hrotswitha is remarkable.

To sum up. From the earliest times known to history, and further back by the reflected light of poetry, there appears to have existed among the Teutonic and Celtic peoples so much respect for women as to form a foundation on which the Christian doctrine of marriage, virginity, and equality of sex could be built. The character of women varied according to the more or less rude condition of the men; more lofty and tragic among the Scandinavian tribes and the Franks, more dignified and domestic among the low Dutch and their colonists the English.

In the Normans, the nation to which more than to any other was committed the shaping of the mediæval world, the most mobile and impressionable, the most practical and enterprising of the northern races, were united, by the intermixture of breeds which naturally resulted from their geographical and political position, German steadfastness, Scandinavian enterprise, and Celtic nimbleness of wit. The Norman character (as Matthew Arnold says) combines 'strenuousness, clearness and rapidity'; and it is perhaps the last of these qualities which is most conspicuous. No change is too sudden for the Norman; and in the Norman race more than any other, is exemplified the contrast of opposites which is characteristic of the Middle Ages, producing un-

[1] See Ducange *s.v.*

foreseen results. As regards womankind, there is no doubt that women were held in honour, though they might sometimes be insulted and outraged. Emma, wife of Edward the Confessor, did more than anyone else to make the Norman Conquest possible; the Duchess Matilda preserves an independent name, neither due to that of her famous husband, nor obscured by it; yet the same Matilda, we are told, was cruelly beaten by Duke William because she said she would never marry a bastard; and her grandchildren, the natural daughters of Henry I., were exposed to shameful mockery by their own father.[2] The stories of the brutal treatment of the Cid's daughters by the Infantes of Carrion, whether historical or legendary, and of the rough wooing of Ximena by the Cid himself, are to the same effect. Corneille's Cid is the idealised knight of the 15th century, not the fierce soldier of the 11th.

The Normans welcomed novelty and created it. Wherever they went new institutions arose. They accepted Christianity, and became pilgrims and crusaders, the builders of churches and monasteries, the supporters of Papal power. They exchanged their Northern tongue for the French, and a new literature arose. They put stones together to make castle-keeps, and became the founders of European architecture. They accepted monasticism, and the light kindled at Bec shone through Western Europe. They visited the East, and kingdoms sprang up where they set foot; new lines of commerce were opened; new codes of law came into existence, new vistas of science, literature and art were revealed. It may be that none of these things

[2] Freeman, *Norman Conquest*, from Ordericus Vitalis.

owed its origin to the Normans. The Normans were not originators of ideas; but they knew how to make use of ideas and to fashion them in action. They had the Roman power of shaping or organizing, with more than Roman versatility; and appearing on the scene at a moment when the Roman Church, the relics of the Roman Empire, and the unorganised elements of society among Celts and Teutons were approaching a condition of fusion, the Normans, acting upon the fringe of the world from the mouth of the Seine to that of the Danube, pioneering, leading, and establishing the slower movement of other nations, brought about a revolution of thought and custom throughout Europe which might have led to anarchy, if it had not been held in by two forces; the organization of the Church, and the defining and formalizing spirit which belongs to the Norman genius, and which compressed into the strong framework of feudalism all the movement of the age, and set in motion the practical sense of the English, the scientific and logical intellect of the French, and the civic experience of the South, to develop that complex unity which we call the Middle Ages, and the culminating point of which in place and time is France in the 13th century.

It is easy to exaggerate the effect of troubadour poetry upon that of Northern France; but the influence of the *gay saber*, the new relation of men to women, or rather of knights to ladies, cannot well be over-estimated. Fully developed by the Provençal poets, and received by the chivalry of Southern France as a rule of life, it was accepted by the northern French and Normans as a new gospel.

In Chapter IX I have touched on the Provençal literature

and love-lore which by means of the troubadours was spread and accepted in all parts of Europe. So highly artificial a system did not arise spontaneously, neither was it invented by one genius; it was the doctrine of a school or a court, consciously developed by poets and recommended to a society in which refinement and barbarism were combined in a manner unintelligible to modern conception. The introduction into chivalry of the *gay saber* or Science of Love 'brought into the customs and ideas of mediæval society, by a general and simultaneous revolution, a new element which became almost immediately dominant, side by side with the purely warlike element and the religious element.'[1]

The new doctrine did not spring from the northern lands; but when brought in from Provence and spread (as far as can be ascertained) by means of crusaders returning from the Holy Land, it found a congenial atmosphere in the North of France and among the Normans, where women already occupied a dignified and comparatively independent position. They could inherit land and hold fiefs:—

> feme que ad terre en fée
> sera d' assez plus estimée.[2]

They were entrusted with the charge of castles when their lords went on crusade. Such a châtelaine in later days was Jeanne de Montfort, who held the castle of Hennebon in Brittany for her husband, and was rescued by Sir Walter Manny; a brave fighter, like Black Agnes of Dunbar.

[1] H. Martin, *Hist. de France*, iii. 376

[2] Wright, *Fulk FitzWarin*.

ST. LEWIS PRESENTING HENRY VI. TO ST. MARY.

To state exactly when and how the change took place is impossible; we can only say generally that when the minds of men are widely stirred by a common emotion rapid and unexpected changes result. Such a common emotion was created by the Crusades. The unity of Christendom was suddenly revealed, and within it the unity of the chivalric caste. We may surmise that, as the brethren of the Temple and the Hospital framed for themselves such a rule of living as should be a model for Christians and knights, so the larger brotherhood of secular chivalry, acting under a similar impulse, and unconsciously affected by the legislating and formalizing instinct of the time, looked about for some new definition of love, and found it in the poetry of the troubadours, the modish literature of the time.

The new lesson came in at first, we may believe, as a court fashion, a fancy of literature: but once taught it was too attractive not to be welcomed. Its extravagance was no drawback to its acceptance, but a recommendation in an age of miracles. Life was glorified by the discovery that it could be built upon love, that every knight and every lady must love, and that the highest glory of a man was to own the domination (*donnoy*) of a lady. Gallantry henceforth became a rule of knightly conduct, and took its place by the side of honour and religion as one of the chief motives of action, the standards to which all conduct must be referred. As the rule of military honour regulated, though it did not subdue, barbaric fierceness, so the rule of gallantry regulated and licensed the sentiment of soldiers separated for long periods from their wives, gave the fair to

the brave, branded marital jealousy and harshness, gave a new position to women, and was justified by authority.

In the century which comes between the middle of the eleventh and the middle of the twelfth, a great change took place in the position of women. Much may happen in the course of three generations of human life, when the world is moving rapidly; fifty years in the Middle Ages, twenty in the nineteenth century may show more movement than five hundred in the Dark Ages, or 'a cycle of Cathay': and the complete elevation of women from the condition of slaves to that of goddesses in so short a time has nothing improbable in it, if we consider it together with other changes which were effected at the same time.

In earlier times, women had reigned, been honoured, and done great deeds for love and hate; but there had hitherto been no gallantry, no artificial attitude of men to women, like that which now arises; for good and evil the relation of the sexes had been natural and simple, the outgrowth of material and social conditions.

From this period onwards a new sentiment takes its place among the leading motives of life; a sentiment which cannot exist among primitive nations, which is incompatible with the circumstances of civic life or of democratic equality, which has nothing in common with the sentiment of 'women's rights,' though it is one of the causes which have given birth to the doctrine of equality of sex; a sentiment, highly artificial and conscious, connected with rank, wealth, and pride of place, and which found its natural development in a state of society in which

the world was governed by a warlike nobility, for whose convenience the trading and labouring classes existed.

Honour, gallantry, and after them religion, were the three motives of chivalry. Religion is a permanent force. Honour and gallantry have been among the chief civilizing energies of later ages. It need not have been so. The civic spirit of Greece and the national feeling of Rome gave rise to a sense of patriotic honour among men, and a quiet dignity among women, which are worthy of being set beside, if not above, the best that the Middle Ages can show. There is still a tinge of barbarism. The best types of universal humanity are those of peace, not of war; and the virtues of the Middle Ages are warlike virtues. Something of the artificial brilliancy of warlike display is always present; splendour is more highly prized than solidity, honour than rectitude. The highest virtue, whether of men or women, is not learnt at courts, the ideal of which was 'amour courtois,'

> [1] Oneur, amour, et vaisselage,
> Secret deduit, plaisance et honnesté,'

nor in camps, where honour, the capital virtue of chivalry, is more esteemed than truth or charity.

But the artificial worship led on to a better idealism and practice than if it had not been. Modern courtesy is descended from mediæval gallantry, and owes to it the touch of romance which is absent from the love-literature of antiquity and the East—Propertius or Hafiz.

According to the complete code of the Gay Science, a young squire must attach himself to a lady in order to receive instruction in gallantry. The lady might either

[1] Ste. Palaye, Part v., Note 19.

become his love or not: she would in either case be older than himself. When he had made his choice, he must try by every means in his power to make himself pleasing in her sight. No word of love must be spoken till after long trial. He must gain distinction in the lists and in war, and after long service might venture to ask some token of favour, which she would long withhold. She might be a maiden or a married woman; the gay science made no distinction. Absolute devotion and unswerving loyalty was required, and all coldness and caprice must be endured. When all seemed to be won, all might be lost by a misplaced word or gesture on the part of the lover. When all tests were surmounted, and the lover admitted to the enjoyment of his desire, he was still no more free than before, but must carry on his suit secretly or openly according as his rival, the lady's husband, was suspicious or careless. The knight might marry some other lady, but his devoir to his lady remained the same. A husband might sometimes assert his rights, as Philip, Count of Flanders, who hanged the troubadour, his wife's lover; or the lord of Castel Rousillon, in the terrible story told by Boccaccio, but as a rule the husband made things equal *par amours;* and neither the power of the clergy (who were not blameless themselves, as many *fabliaux* and Italian *novelle* bear witness), nor the purer influence of Germanic and Celtic chastity, prevailed against a state of manners which, while it was in harmony with the gay, frivolous, and pleasure-loving tone of courts and castles, was sanctioned by the most powerful of all moral suasions, the code of honour.

So extravagant a situation cannot have been fully realised

in actual life; but the sentiment of chivalry demanded this profession, and the rule of honour included it, however human nature might protest. We shall probably be right in believing that the ordinary life of English men and women was not deeply affected by this convention; but that in the fashionable world a practice largely obtained which may be compared with that of the last century in Italy, where every lady of rank had a *cavaliere servente* as well as a husband, as Byron's letters abundantly testify; and that the relation might be real or conventional, according to the circumstances of the parties to it.

The rules of womanly conduct, as set forth in the romances, are altogether opposed to modern ideas of modesty. Young women talked among themselves as freely as young men now-a-days, and the fullest license of language was allowed in the common intercourse of men and women. Stories are told in all languages of the repartees made by noble ladies to the '*gabs*' or jesting questions put to them by noble knights, from which it would appear that no conceivable grossness was unacceptable if it was witty. The ladies in the *Heptameron* and the Italian *Novelle* sometimes put up their fans, but it is to hide smiles, not blushes. Knights and squires were freely admitted to the chambers of ladies, and most of the intrigues described in romances and *fabliaux* take their opportunity from this custom. The duenna seems to be almost unknown: her place is taken by the waiting-woman, herself a lover and ready to help her mistress in all her plans. Thus in *Florice and Blancheflour*, when the lover is introduced in a basket of flowers, Clarice, Blancheflour's handmaid and confidante, aids them in their

amours, and is rewarded by marrying the admiral of Murcia (who becomes a Christian) Florice's rival. A lady's handmaidens solace themselves with the squires, whilst their mistress takes her pleasure with the knight. Another lady sends a waiting-woman to take her place, till she is ready to receive her lover. Gautier d'Aupais visits his *damoiselle* in her chamber. Blonde of Oxford stays all night with her lover Jehan, but in all innocence. So, too, King Lancelot in the Romance of the Round Table visits the lady of Bellegarde in her chamber (being friends, not lovers *par amours*), but is slain by the jealous duke in the Forest Perilous. Merlin, in semblance of a fair young squire, meets at the fountain Numiane, the daughter of a vavasour at a manor hard by. She asks her to shew her some 'quaint plays,' such as going on water dryshod, and offers him her love 'by covenant' for this. When he has shewn her a magic dance of ladies in an orchard, 'Fair sweet friend,' she says, 'ye have done so much that I am all yours.' 'Damsel, now hold ye by covenant.'

On the other hand, Gyran le Courtois is loved by the lady of Malorne, wife of Danayn the Red, and is tempted by her. He looks on his sword-belt, on which is written 'loyaulté passe tout—faulseté honnit tout,' and the thought that Danayn is his own brother-in-arms so works with him that he plunges his sword into his own breast; and this though Danayn had carried off Gyran's mistress Bloye.

Sir Arnald, says Fulk Fitz Warin (c. 1200) loved Marion de la Briere, chief lady in waiting (*mestre chaumbrere*) of the Lady of Dinan, who 'luy garanta fere sa volonté en toutes choses'; and when the castle was assailed, they

were found together. The story is told without the slightest hint of blame to either. Love *par amours* was thought compatible with modesty, if it was a prelude to marriage; and no disparagement to honour in the case of a married woman, if the rules of gallantry were observed. In most of the stories the first advances are made by the lady, whether wife or maiden, and it is the knight who is coy. Guilladon says—

'j'aime le nouveau soudoyer,
Eliduc, le bon chevalier . . .
si par amour me veut aimer,
de sa personne m'assurer,
je ferai bien tout son plaisir :
je ne vis jamais chevalier
qui se fit pour cela prier !'
S'il n'a de mon amour cure,
jamais n'aurai joie en ma vie.'

Marguerite of Castel Rousillon fell in love with the Squire William of Cabestanh, and taught him how to woo her—the tragic end of the story is well known.[2] The lady in the story of Sir Gawayn came thrice to his bedside, and kissed him each time. He blushed when the Green Knight told him that it was known. He had not sinned, but had not been perfectly loyal. In the end he was praised by the lady for courtesy, and by her husband for modesty. So too, Horn will only let the fair Rimel kiss him, and does penance for that; and Sir Generydes and Clarionas go through endless adventures together in perfect innocence, till at length each is convinced of the purity of the other. Then no further barrier

[2] The story is referred by some to an earlier writer, the Chastelein de Coucy, and it may be a Celtic fable, but as a trait of manners it is authentic. See Martin, *Hist. de France*, iii. 387 n. 2.

divides them—marriage is but looked forward to as the sanction of love.

Much harm must have come of this want of reserve; but we are not justified in concluding that the women of the Middle Ages were universally or commonly unchaste. If ignorance is not always innocence, neither need innocence be ignorance. No one has thrown doubt on the purity of Shakespeare's heroines, though Beatrice and Rosalind, and even the secluded Miranda and the virtuous Imogen use plain language.

Love, as described in the romances of chivalry, is 'a source of moral perfection for the woman, and valour and chivalrous qualities for the lover.'

> 'Amours . . . est principaument
> voie de vie honnestement.'[1]

'Por l'amor des dames devient li vilains cortois.'[2]

'He who loves not is but half man.' 'He who loves not is like an ear of corn without grain.'

> He were never good werryoure
> that cowde not love aright.[3]

It is justified by jealousy, the most unchivalrous of passions.[4]

> Li jalous et li dous
> envious savourous
> de corrous amourous
> morra; m'avra,

says the *chanson:* and in the beautiful Provençal story of *Flamenca* we read that her husband's jealousy and the

[1] Chastelein de Coucy.
[2] Wright, *Thirteenth Century Poetry*, p. 161.
[3] *The Sowdone of Babylon.* (A translation of *Fierabras.*)
[4] Alfred Jeanroy—*Hist. de la Langue*, etc., Vol. I., chap. 5.

reasons for it were the common talk of all Auvergne;—'Per tot Alverne fan cansos e serventes, coplas e sos,' about the unfortunate Archambaud. Guinevere is condemned, because her husband Arthur was faithful to her and incapable of jealousy: but Tristran and Iseult are acquitted in the court of honour. This is the true chivalric note. Honour and courtesy are the lesson of chivalry, taking precedence of truth and chastity: and they have something to say for themselves at a time when women were looked upon as an incident of their fiefs, and were bought and sold without regard to personal preference. Chivalry exalted womanhood: but feudalism considered the marriage of lands more than that of human beings; and where natural feeling is ignored, nature will assert herself. It must also be remembered that according to the rule of chivalry a woman was bound to her husband if he did not offend by infidelity or jealousy. Custance, Griselda and Enid are as true to the type as Iseult and Flamenca: it is only the extravagance of the Provençal school that regards marriage as the estate in which love *par amours* is obligatory on all knights and ladies. According to this ideal, everybody must have a lover as well as a husband. Love is no part of marriage. A woman had in fact two husbands. The terms of religion even were transferred to the connexion *par amours*. Gerard of Roussillon, a poet of the thirteenth century, makes his heroine, immediately after her marriage to the Emperor, give a ring and the promise of her love to Count Gerard[1] in presence of witnesses and with invocation of 'Jesus the

[1] Martin, *Hist. de France*, iii. 384; *Hist. Litter. de la France*, xv. 582.

Redeemer.' The word 'chastity' is applied to the loyalty of lovers.

The riddle of love *par amours* is perhaps insoluble. The life described in the romances is not restrained by chastity. It has no relation to marriage; but the grossness as well as the humour of the *fabliaux* is entirely absent. Love, if its irregular nature is overlooked, is lofty and pure, compatible with honour, self-restraint, and modesty; it is the source of the noblest sentiments in man and woman. We are tempted to believe that the framework of the stories is conventional, but the sentiment real, and that the romances represent the life of the times as much as the literature of the stage and of modern French fiction represents the morals of our contemporaries, and no more. It is contrary to nature that men and women should be at once so noble and so vile. But it is impossible to doubt that there was a deep taint of immorality in mediæval society; and vice was certainly condoned and even held up as a model of conduct in the stories which form the greater part of the popular literature of three or four centuries, the period of the romances and songs of the Troubadours.

THE DAUPHIN JOHN GOING OUT TO THE WAR WITH ENGLAND.—Harl. 4379, *f* 160.

PROCLAMATION OF PEACE BY HERALDS OF FRANCE AND ENGLAND.—Harl. 4379, *f* 182.

[*Face page 73.*

CHAPTER XIII

RELIGION

Chivalry barbaric valour consecrated by the Church—The Church in the world and against the world—Religious and secular ideals—Church dominant or persecuted—Church-and-State compromises—Church in the dark ages—Growth of Papal power—Secular clergy—Clergy in the Crusade—Contests between royal and sacardotal power—Anselm, Lanfranc, etc.—Religious orders—Corruption of the clergy—Ecclesiastical courts—Chivalry a secular institution on terms with the Church—Unity of belief in middle ages—Literal character of mediæval religion, alike in piety and revolt—Avignon captivity—Degradation of Roman court—Worldly character of clergy and Chivalry—Decay of learning.

CHIVALRY was distinguished from barbarian valour in being adopted and hallowed by the Church. How did it come about that the clergy did not by precept and example keep the knights to observance of their vows, but were ready to condone unchastity, class-pride and inhumanity?

The antagonism between two ideas, the Church in the world and the Church against the world, has always been a hindrance to the influence of the clergy. If the Church could have remained poor and uncorrupted by contact with affairs, as under the Roman Empire before Christianity was established as the State religion, then the kingdom of Heaven in the world would have been realised. The Christian idea, the Church in the world, would have prevailed; and the secular power would either have been subordinated to the spiritual, as it has been now and then at different periods of history—during the first Crusade, in

the times of the Papal supremacy, of Calvin at Geneva, of the Puritan movement in England and Scotland, of the establishment of the American colonies—periods of enthusiastic idealism, which last only as long as secular influences are kept in the background by abnormal material conditions; or else the secular idea would have prevailed, as in Italy at the present day, when the ideas which determine State action are incompatible with the doctrines upheld by the Church; or as under the Pagan Empire, when the Christian idea was ignored or attacked. In such periods the Church is either dominant or oppressed. In the first case the clergy become tyrannical; in the second the Church protests and waits its time. This is the Church against the world.

In such cases as these the secular and the ecclesiastical elements are kept apart; but in the long run a compromise commonly results, which like most compromises, is a working arrangement, but is unfavourable to the maintenance of high ideals. This is the Church in the world: the Church of Concordats, *Congés d' eslire*, and Establishments.

The clergy in the dark ages were little less ignorant and brutalized than the laity. They never forget the Christian doctrine and rule of life; but they could not raise the people, among whom they lived and whom they resembled, to a higher level than their own. Religion was confounded with gross and material superstition. But as the clergy were more learned that the laity, they came insensibly into the position of secular counsellors. The Papacy, that great civilizing and organizing institution, became paramount. The Popes were secular as well as spiritual sovereigns. The

clergy became possessed of land which they held by military tenure. Though they did not usually bear arms themselves, they were represented by *vidames* or champions. They furnished their quota of knights to their lord's levies. They had to mind warlike things, and yielded to the temptation to think too much of them. The Church ceased to be a refuge for the attacks of Franks and Norsemen. The clergy helped the lords; the lords, the clergy. It was even said that the clergy were more ready to go to war than the laity. The military appetite was stimulated by the sacred character of the Crusades, in which ecclesiastics sometimes held high command. A notable instance is that of Pelagius, Bishop of Albano and Legate of Innocent III in the 6th Crusade; whose military ambition—for nothing would content him short of supreme command—prevailed over the wiser counsels of John de Brienne, and caused the loss of Damietta and the ruin of the whole crusade. Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, fought at Hastings under the Pope's banner, the Bishop of Beauvais took the Earl of Salisbury prisoner with his own hand at Bouvines (1214). The Bishop of Acre bore the True Cross at the fatal battle of Tiberias (1187), and when he fell, it was taken up by the Bishop of Lydda. Thomas Becket when chancellor acted as general of the royal forces. At Poictiers (1356) the Bishop of Châlons was killed.[1]

At home, the clergy became feudal lords themselves, holding castles and exercising feudal sovereignty. They had, as well as the barons, their courts of justice, their tolls and fines, their dungeons and gibbets. A bishop of Durham

[1] Froissart, i. 161.

like Randolph Flambard, in the reign of William Rufus, was as great a chieftain as the Earl of Warenne; and in his diocese the bishop's Peace, not the king's, was kept. The diplomatic, judicial, and administrative business of the Middle Ages was mainly carried on by a long line of ecclesiastics, the last and most magnificent of whom was Wolsey.

From time to time efforts were made by enthusiasts to separate the civil from the spiritual sphere. Lanfranc and Anselm resisted the Norman kings. Grosteste, St. Hugh, and St. Edmund set an example of episcopal dignity uncorrupted by secular greatness. The rules of St. Benedict, St. Bernard and St. Bruno, the Franciscan and Dominican orders, and at a later date the Jesuits, Oratorians, and other societies made serious and for a time successful efforts to keep religion unspotted by the world. But each in its turn was corrupted by its very success, and monks and friars were scoffed at by the laity who had reason to accuse them of hypocrisy. It is one of the commonplaces of history that the corruption of the clergy led to their discredit in the times preceding the Reformation. When a monk or friar is the stock character in a story of intrigue, and when ladies were told to look out for a handsome young squire or a *biaus clercs amoureux* as a lover, it was difficult for the clergy to preach a severe morality. Pride, extravagance, and loose living are said by all mediæval satirists to have been the common vices of the clergy: and severity in condemning sin is incompatible with these vices. No wonder that confessors dealt mildly with the sins of chivalry, and encouraged penitents to make composition by money payments for masses or the founda-

tion and endowment of chantries, churches and monasteries.

The Church should have infused more of a Christian spirit into chivalry; for chivalry was a Christian institution, designed to sanctify that love of war and adventure which was inherent in the times that gave it birth. But feudalism corrupted the clergy, and the clergy failed to purify the feudal society. General barbarism, ignorance and license, rather than the temptation to take up the noble sport of war, was the reason that the high office of the clergy was imperfectly discharged. Besides being feudal barons, the clergy were also lawyers, greedy of fees and skilful to bring offenders of all classes within the reach of their own courts. The ecclesiastical jurisdiction over which Henry II and Becket quarrelled was not only an infringement of the royal prerogative: it was also a means of oppressing the subject, without redress from the common law or the king's courts. The clergy desired it for other and higher reasons; but it also brought them power and money. We need not suppose that the clergy loved money more than other lawyers; but they became very wealthy, and the possession of wealth diminishes spiritual as it increases worldly power. With all allowances for exaggeration, it is impossible to doubt that the ecclesiastical courts were oppressive and exacting, and that the archdeacons deserved their ill name. The legal character of the thirteenth century, which reduced everything to form and system, was strongly impressed upon the clergy; and their courts were not more equitable than those of the lay judges. It was said that everything could be bought there by those who had money. Judgment, too, often went in favour of the rich. This was known to rich and poor, and the

reputation of venality and avarice stuck to the clergy till the Reformation broke their power.

Considered as distinct orders, the interest of nobles and clergy might agree or disagree. In their private relation, the lord of the castle and his chaplain, the chancellor-bishop and his king, were closely associated, and knew each other's strength and weakness. The clerk could not rebuke his lord's sins too plainly, the lord could not dispense with the offices of religion. To live in the world was to tolerate the world. Chivalry, with all its religious significances became and continued to be a secular institution with which the Church kept such terms as it could. An opportunity of something better was lost: but it was lost by the circumstances of feudal society more than by the fault of either knights or priests. Wherever the fault may have been, the fact is certain. In the compromise between the Church and the world, it was rather the Church which conformed than the world. It is a long way from Gregory VII to Clement V, from Godfrey of Bouillon to du Guesclin and la Hire.

That the Church and the Christian religion are not the same thing, Catholic and Protestant agree. But the mediæval world had nothing put before it as believable except the dogma of the Roman Church. The burden of faith was lightly borne, for there was no temptation to unbelief. To disbelieve any part of the Church's creed was not only highly dangerous, but would have seemed the height of folly. The doctors of the Church knew all that could be known, except such knowledge as was bought at the cost of their own souls by magicians and the worshippers of Mahound. To quarrel with the decisions of the clergy would have been to act like

a man who should in these days impugn the conclusions of Euclid or the law of universal gravitation. To say, then, that the mediæval knights firmly believed the doctrines of the Roman Church is to say nothing; for they could hardly be other than believers.[1] Reforms are brought about by those who feel grievances: and the nobles and gentry had no grievance against the doctrine of the Church. They were ready to protest against the pride, wealth, luxury and tyranny of the clergy, and willingly passed laws against clerical domination. These grievances touched them—but they looked to the Church to consecrate their knighthood, to give them the use of sacraments, and to bless their death and burial and open the doors of Purgatory and Paradise to admit them. The tone of the *chansons de geste* and the knightly romances is perfectly orthodox and even religious, whatever the morals of the heroes and heroines may be. The knights hear mass every morning; they venerate the holy places, and abhor Jews, Saracens and Turks; they worship the Virgin and the Saints with undoubting devotion. The perfect knight was a perfect Christian. His knighthood was blessed by the Church. Before his admission to the Order, he kept vigil before the altar, confessed, heard mass, and received the sacrament. He was to attend mass every day. If his private prayers were shortened, it was by the indulgence of the Church, and he was bound never to omit them. 'God, Thou knowest how busy I must be to-day. If I forget Thee, do not Thou forget me,' is the natural prayer

[1] There are, of course, instances to the contrary. William Rufus, Frederick II, some of the Provençal poets, Knights Templars and others, may have been secret unbelievers: but it was dangerous to soul and body to profess doubt.

of the Christian soldier. It was one of the bitterest complaints of the Templars in their captivity that they were kept from hearing mass and from confession. When mortally wounded in battle, if they could not have the services of a priest, knights would confess to each other, and we often read in the romances of their reverently consuming, when at the point of death, a blade of grass as the symbol of a sacrament. Their religion was mechanical and ceremonious; for much literalism was mingled with the idealism of the middle ages. It has often been remarked that the *Divine Comedy*, though it rises to the highest regions of imagination, is also strangely literal and matter-of-fact. It is no more so than the *Summa* of St. Thomas and the fabric of mediæval law and science. To this day the Pope grants indulgences of so many days and years, decides upon the merits of Saints, pronounces upon the subtlest and most profound questions of divine philosophy, as if he kept the ledger of Heaven and had a scientific knowledge of mysteries, measurable and ponderable. It was natural moreover that rough soldiers, leading a busy life with little leisure or inclination for thinking, should accept implicitly the only form of religion which was open to them. Soldiers and sailors, if they are religious at all, generally take up some form of belief which is plain and decided. They like to obey the word of command, and do not love speculation and doubt; and are more inclined to belief than men who live in the world and are vexed with problems of life.

The very blasphemies which are recorded testify the reality of belief common to good and bad men. William Rufus said, 'God shall never see me a good man, I have

suffered too much at His hands;' and when the judgment of an ordeal went against him, 'God a just judge? Henceforth I will judge my own cause.' Henry II, when he heard that his son Henry had turned against him, fiercely defied God.[1] 'Since thou hast taken away from me what I prized most, Thou shalt not have that which Thou prizest most in me, my soul.' Akin to this was the cruelty of Phillip the Fair, when he refused to let the Templars hear Mass or see a priest, and of Philip VI, when he put his prisoners to death without confession, hoping to kill body and soul at once. Hugh, brother of Bohemund the crusader, having bad news of the state of Christian affairs at Antioch (1100), cried out, 'O God, if Thou art almighty, why hast Thou suffered this? What king or emperor ever deserted his men? Who now will trust Thee or fight for Thee?' The crusaders looked upon themselves as vassals of Christ; and when the Christian cause failed at Acre in 1221, many Templars were believed to have renounced their liege lord who had betrayed them. It was noted that the gay party of young princes and ladies who put out in the Blanche Nef refused with jeers and laughter the ministrations of priests who came to bless the ship with holy water. A sudden death by sea without sacraments affected the imagination, and superstition easily suggested a reason.

The secular life of the Middle Ages was probably neither more nor less Christian than in other days. There was much open profanity and notorious vice, much con-

[1] Like Farinata degli Uberti in the *Inferno* (xxv. 3): '*Togli, Dio, che a te le squadro!*'; but Henry II still lived, and had hope of salvation.

spicuous virtue and sincere piety. But men in general believed in Heaven and Hell, they respected and conformed to the offices of religion, and if possible they never left the world without making their peace with the Church. This religiousness is exaggerated by writers like Kenelm Digby into true religion. It was in most cases neither religion nor hypocrisy, but sincere belief contrasted with lax morality.

It may here be pointed out that the period of Froissart coincides with the Avignon 'captivity' and that deterioration of the Roman Church which preceded the more complete degradation of Rome under the Popes of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The Church had declined from its high estate under the Innocents and Alexanders, when the Popes, though many of their designs were worldly, believed in their mission and were believed in. Their exaggeration of the temporal sovereignty bore bitter fruit, as Dante foresaw. What the Popes did on a grand scale, the spiritual lords, with their army of archdeacons, summoners, indulgence-mongers, and bloodsuckers of all kinds, did in detail. The conscience of the world was scandalised by seeing 'Christ sold in the market all day long.[1] We might reason *à priori* that it must have been so, but the popular literature is positive evidence to the same effect. We learn from Langland, Chaucer, and Gower of the corruption of the clergy in England. Wyclif is nearly of the same date. Boccaccio in Italy, Gerson in France tell the same story. Those who preached the Gospel and lived of the Gospel did not live Gospel lives. The foul shepherd

[1] Dante.

could not have clean sheep.[1] The worldly and courtly tone of Froissart reflects the manners of society. The idealism which made the Crusades had expired, and when fifty years later Æneas Silvius[2] called passionately upon the Christian princes to take arms in defence of Europe against the Turks, since all hope of recovering the Holy Places was lost, he found no response. Interdicts and excommunications were no longer feared. The kings had made their concordats, and could hold their own against the Pope. A century more, and the Roman Curia could not resist the Reformation. In self defence the Church reformed itself not in doctrine, but in morals, and the candle lighted by the Fathers of Trent, Ignatius Loyola, Charles Borromeo, Francis de Sales, and Philip Neri has never gone out. If the successors of Clement V had been wise in their generation they would have listened to the censures of Gerson, Wyclif and Huss, and might have regained their hold upon the conscience of the laity, whose anger against their corruption did not take the form of scepticism in doctrine. What it concerns us here to note is that the worldly character of the late chivalry is in some measure at any rate to be set down to the worldly ambition, the pride, greed, ignorance and evil life of a great part of the clergy. Thomas à Kempis, Tauler, Wyclif himself, St. Catherine and St. Theresa, and many more, show how much ardent devotion existed in the Church: but to the outer world the clergy seemed to be no more religious than the laity, and this state things had its natural effect upon a society given up to of luxury and display, an age in which the distinction between

[1] Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, *Prologue*, 479. [2] Pius II.

rich and poor was growing more marked, whilst the middle classes were beginning to gain wealth and to feel their own power, and at the same time missing the pastoral care and guidance in the conduct of life which they had a right to look for from the clergy. The most enlightened of the clergy were employed as ministers of state and ambassadors; the Franciscans and Dominicans had ceased to be learned; the Universities were homes of stupidity and obscurantism; learning was sinking lower and lower, and the general relaxation and want of aim was reflected in the manners of the nobles and gentry, who, as we have said, were also loosing their feudal greatness, and looking to the court for power and advancement.

The division of history by centuries is artificial: but in a human affairs there is a tide and an ebb, and the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are times of reflux, as the thirteenth and sixteenth show a mounting wave: and in no department of human affairs is this seen more than in the religious history of the time.

CHAPTER XIV

PEOPLE

Pride of nobles—Serfdom—Truce of God—England—Oppression of the poor—Fusion of English and Normans into one nation—English lords a gentry, not a chivalry—Chivalry made no rules for social relations between rich and poor—Permanent results.

THE condition of the people during the chivalric period belongs rather to general history than to the history of Chivalry. The pride which made the nobles look down upon the poor man was produced by other causes than chivalry, though the consecration of a single class was unfavourable to the rise of the people. Chivalry, produced and fostered by war, taking pride in deeds of arms which tend to personal exaltation of man above man and class above class, and closely bound up with the system of military feudalism, could not by its very nature be other than a hindrance to the growth of a nation in the arts of peace. Pride of birth combined with pride of estate to keep the people down, and it survived, and still survives the loss of power and privilege. Norman knights looked upon the English peasants as their prey; robbed them of their goods, maltreated them in person, and did not respect the honour of their wives and daughters. The story,

of Wat Tyler could not have been told in the times of the Norman kings, when the peasants were too miserable and down-trodden to resist oppression and outrage.

The bulk of the people in every country were serfs. The Church might be merciful to them, but their secular masters were not. Many poor people took arms in the first Crusade, hoping to escape the tyranny of their lords; and lords going on crusade recommended those whom they left behind to treat the villeins mercifully, not for the love of God, but for fear of mutiny. In the Assise of Jerusalem, an enlightened code, as far as feudalism permitted, a runaway serf might be claimed as if he were a strayed falcon. His value was estimated at one-third that of a warhorse. The Church has been blamed for not doing more to raise their condition. The wonder rather is, that the Church was able to help them at all. What could be done, they did, in awakening the conscience of the knights and gentry. They could not alter the fundamental rule of the society in which they lived. The Truce of God, brought about by the influence of the clergy, spared (as did Magna Carta) the labourer's cart and ox; and the serfs of the Church were more humanely treated than others.

For this oppression of the poor, Chivalry had no remedy. When remedy came, it was in spite of the nobles and gentry, whose chief interest in peasants was to exact their service of labour and taxes. The lords had every reason to resist, as they did, the rise of the towns to independence and the enfranchisement of the villeins, and if they sometimes took part with the poor against the rich, they acted from political reasons, as

Simon de Montfort, or with the object of making head against the king, as the barons against John and Henry III.

King John's excesses of fury and tyranny were imitated by Fawkes de Breauté and his like. At Boston fair a company of gentlemen, merely for sport, burnt the booths and slew the traders. The barbarity of their 'natural lords' gave popularity to generous outlaws. Though we no longer believe that Thomas Becket, the son of the Norman burgher, upheld the cause of the English people, or that Robin Hood carried on private warfare against the Normans, we see that such champions were much needed. The union of Norman and English was a slow process: it did not, when completed, bridge over the interval between rich and poor. English landlords became knights, Norman landlords became English gentlemen. The distinction of race became obsolete, but the poor man was still oppressed: the Englishman of gentle blood used all the feudal privileges which were brought in at the Conquest, and became something of a Frenchman through his chivalry, learning to talk French if he went to court or wished to gain reputation in the wars, and adopting French ideas of honour and gallantry. The military noblesse and knighthood of the Norman and Angevin times were transformed in process of time into a peaceful and home-keeping gentry, by a combination of external events with internal changes which acted upon chivalry and made it more and more a pageant for a holiday, not the business of life. 'How many knights are there now in England,' says Caxton[1] 'that have the use and exercise of a knight? . . .

[1] *Of the Order of Chivalry.*

O ye knights of England, where is the custom and usage of noble chivalry? What do ye now but go to the bains and play at dice? Alas! what do ye but sleep and take ease, and are all disordered from chivalry?' It was well for England that this was so. Justice Shallow is a better type of country gentleman than Fawkes de Breauté, in as much as peace is better than war.

In this relation it is difficult if not impossible to separate chivalry from feudalism. It is not much to set down to the credit of chivalry that it relieved the monotony of the poor man's life, but it is something. What fox-hunting and stag-hunting, race meetings, and cricket and football matches are to the present generation, what bull-baitings and bear-baitings, wakes, revels, and fairs were to our grandfathers and great-grandfathers, tournaments supplied in a much more splendid fashion to merry England in the Middle Ages. Such shows as those described in 'Kenilworth' must have brought money into a neighbourhood, and given harmless amusement to the hard-working peasantry who had no hope of advancing their estate or seeking their fortunes. Where they were born, and as they were born, they must die. Nowadays every country boy may be a Dick Whittington: then it was rare enough to be turned into a ballad. Many yeomen accompanied their lords to 'the Gallia wars,'[1] and earned money and credit like Pistol —but this was an incident of feudalism, and has no proper bearing upon the rise and fall of knighthood.

The rule of chivalry demanded that the knight should succour the oppressed: this was interpreted in action as

[1] Shakespeare, *K. Henry V*, v. i.

meaning giving license to waste his neighbour's lands and burn his tenants' ricks in defence of some gentleman or gentlewoman kept out of their rights; not to debar him from getting all he could out of his own tenants by making them work on his fields without pay, grind their corn at his mill, pay him dues and tolls on every necessary of life; and if they rebelled, from shutting them up in his dungeon, or if he dared not do that, submitting them to every vexation that can be invented by the master of a troop of insolent servants. All these things were connected with feudalism, and chivalry was a part of feudalism. It set a standard of honour and gentleness, and we may well believe that the best of the English knights were courteous to their inferiors, and could give and take as fellow-subjects of the king. But chivalry had nothing to say about the intercourse of rich and poor, master and servant. Its rules and virtues were of personal observance; and as custom changed they ceased to have relation to the facts of life. Our English knighthood was absorbed insensibly into the body of the nation. Men like Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Gilbert and Raleigh, the 'fighting Veres' of the Palatinate, who had many of the virtues and faults of mediæval knights, cared more for their English gentility than for any fantastic sacredness of knighthood. They liked to use the language of chivalry, and play at breaking lances for the love of ladies, and practised the duello with more eagerness and punctilio than the champions in the lists of old.

The pomp of heraldry perished with the pride of power. What remained was a tradition of honour and good faith; of courtesy to men, and still more to women; and

out of this was to be developed a humanity which even now began to cast its eyes beyond the narrow limits of a class. Whatever their faults may have been, the new nobility of the Tudors knew more about the mass of the English people, than the Scropes and Mortimers of an earlier time. The pupil had gone beyond the teacher. These traditions belong to no age, they adapt themselves to all conditions; but they were taught to our own country by the means of chivalry. So let chivalry have some credit for them.

CHAPTER XV

DECLINE

Brilliancy of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries—Changes in war, showing the weakness of chivalry—Thirteenth century compared with earlier and later times—Lewis IX, Edward II, Philip IV—Typical characters—Wars of Edward III, of Edward I, and Lewis IX—Decay of religious impulse—Changes in war and politics—Free companies—Orders of chivalry—Ransom of prisoners; mercenary spirit—Otterburn—Infantry and archery; paid cavalry—Scientific warfare—Henry VII and the Earl of Oxford—Equality of blood—English nobility and gentry—Disparagation—The Truce of God—Abolition of private war—The duels—Gallantry—Decline of religious belief—Growth of ceremony Francis I and Bayard—Carpet knights—Duellists and bravos—Duelling in England—Rule of honour.

To all appearance the mediæval period reached its highest point of success and brilliancy in the reigns of Edward III and his successors till the Wars of the Roses. Never were feasts and tournaments more magnificent. New orders of knighthood were instituted. Heralds issued their decrees concerning coat-armour and precedence. Romances were written as if King Arthur and Charlemagne were reigning. Lords and gentlemen and ladies dreamed of chivalry and talked its language. The love of ladies was never professed more loudly. Vows were made and favours won, duels were fought in the lists, the distinction between knights and churls was more fully maintained than ever, pride of ancestry, rank, and office was never valued higher.

But the best days of chivalry were past; and the time in

which it produced its fairest fruits was that which preceded the French wars. It is true that the splendid side of chivalry was never more perfectly exhibited than by Edward III and his sons, and the great soldiers who fought under them, Chandos, Audley, Manny and their companions. Pride of birth and contempt of those who were not nobly born, state and ceremony, the pomp of war and peace, personal honour and love of personal distinction made a brave show in the world; and it may suit some historians to represent this as all that chivalry was worth. But in reality these were the accidents, not the substance of chivalry; and chivalry as a power in the world was beginning to decline. The power of chivalry lay in its representing the conditions of the art of war; and the wars of Edward III shewed—to the bewilderment of the French noblesse—that chivalry was beginning to be out of date, and was giving way to other conditions of war and politics than those which had made it one of the moving forces in human affairs.

If then we wish to see the merits and demerits of chivalry clearly set forth, we must study the thirteenth century, and the former half of the fourteenth, rather than any other period earlier or later. Earlier, because the times, though earnest, were rougher and less refined; later, because the age of Froissart was more interested in knightly combats and the colours, trappings, cognisances, and disguises of the combatants, than in the issues of the war, more eager to take a wealthy prisoner than to win a battle—and because the virtues of loyalty and courtesy, purity and clemency, and all the knightly virtues except liberality, are better illustrated at the earlier

date. The crusaders of 1250 are as full of religious zeal as those of 1099. The king of France risks the lives of himself and his whole army because he will not take an oath in which there is a taint of impiety. He is filled with a constant sense of the presence and aid of God and the saints. Compare with this the inaction of Edward II, who took the cross and stayed at home, and the like oath of Philip IV, which he regarded no more than 'the vows which knights make to ladies.' In the earlier period, Europe was still barbarous. Religion may have been more powerful, but it was less enlightened, more dependent on superstitious terror, and more continually contrasted with actual cruelty and injustice. The feudal system was at its height, with its accompanying evils of petty sovereignty and private war, which made good government impossible. Henry II's centralizing and unifying genius, which aimed at establishing the monarchy as the court of appeal in all matters of government civil and ecclesiastical, was in advance of the age; which is more truly represented by his sons, alike in their good and bad qualities the mirror of the age in which they lived, partly because they were less English than their father. The legislative and administrative activity of such rulers as Edward I, Lewis IX, and Alfonso X in destroying private war, taking the custody of castles out of private hands, regulating the relations of Church and State, protecting merchants and traders, creating a single system of law and finance, and bringing law into the place of custom, created national unity, and pointed towards a state of things in which chivalry became a plaything and an unreality.

The war of Scotland and the war of Tunis were undertaken in a graver and more manly spirit than those of Edward III in France or the Black Prince in Spain.

A comparison of typical men leads to a similar conclusion. The earlier men are more direct and primitive than the later. Compare our Henry II with Henry IV, Philip Augustus with Lewis XI, Becket with Wykeham, Strongbow with Talbot.

Edward I and St. Lewis, men very different from each other and offering different aspects of the chivalrous ideal, differ still more from du Guesclin, Chandos, and the Black Prince, though they use much the same language, and do similar exploits. A new spirit has come into war: the wind no longer fills the sails of knightly emprise. The sense of conscious superiority, of being able to ride down all opposition, is no longer secure. The Black Prince, Chandos and Guesclin vie with each other in generosity in the matter of ransoms. Chandos receives an insult from the young Earl of Pembroke, and like Achilles sulks in his tent, then rouses himself like Achilles, and meets a glorious death. The battles are gay with banners and surcoats, pennons and pennoncels; knights challenge each other, shout their *cris de guerre*, and wear their ladies' badges, or dress themselves in strange apparel to keep a vow. All is arranged—at any rate by the narrator—to set off the doughty deeds of highborn champions, gentlemen of sixteen quarterings, conscious of heraldic worth, knights of the Garter and the Star, bearers of names three centuries old, decorated with official titles, jealous and quick in honour,

but thinking perhaps less of the duty to be done to-day than of the praises of to-morrow. All the circumstance of chivalry is there: but there is beginning to be a sense of affectation. The knights sound their own praises too much; for knightly *devoir*, like maiden honour, must not assert itself, if it is to be believed. In the warfare of Edward I and Lewis IX, there is less of the feeling of playing an elaborate game according to the rules, a game to which, as to a tournament, none but nobles are admitted. The Black Prince comforts King John after the loss of the Battle of Poictiers by telling him 'vous avez conquis aujourd'hui le hault nom de prouesse, et avez passé tous les mieux faisans de vostre côté.' St. Lewis, after doing great deeds of arms on the fatal day of Mansurah—('Never, I promise you,' says Joinville 'have I seen so fine a man at arms')—can only weep over the loss of his brother who had turned victory into defeat, and say 'Blessed be God for what He gives us.'

We must not however exaggerate the difference. Where material exterior conditions remain, the same spiritual conditions often persist; or the change which is proceeding is not observed till the frame of society is shaken and the weak parts drop out. Such a shaking was produced by the discovery of gunpowder, of the printing press, of the steam-engine (to take obvious instances), and by the outburst of mechanical invention during the nineteenth century. At such times fashions age rapidly and give place to new, and changes before unnoticed are perceived. New material conditions change our habits, our habits affect our thoughts and even our principles, and our eyes are turned in a new direction, not to be calculated by any human pre-

science. The crusading period vastly enlarged the world's horizon. At its conclusion, religion was beginning to cool, and the age of mediæval 'economists and calculators,' politicians, worldly churchmen, and lawyers came in. Christendom was more wealthy and luxurious. Knighthood was more showy and less effective. Honour was a stronger and a less exacting motive than faith. Invention had given place to improvement, and mere improvement without novelty grows stale. We see it in heraldry, in literature, and in architecture, which represents an age as it were in symbols, more faithfully than any other art. The world wanted a new impulse. From the first Crusade till the last the religious motive is prominent; from the end of the Crusades till the complete revolution of the art of war in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries chivalry becomes less religious and less serious. Between the date of Robert Courthose, one of the earliest types of chivalry, and that of Talbot, one of the latest, a great change in the methods of war had taken place, which may be typified by the license of private war in the earlier age and the rise of the Free Companies in the later. Personal prowess is the characteristic of the former, of the latter, business-like warfare and politic intrigue. There is no clear line to be drawn—all generalizations are disturbed by the appearance of a Joan of Arc or a Bayard in the later period, and of a Bertrand de Born or a Henry II in the earlier. But in the main the distinction is true; and Edward I is the typical sovereign of chivalry, Lewis XI of policy though one and the other made use of the same commonplaces.

As the institution of orders of knighthood marked the rise

of chivalry, when the enthusiasm of the crusaders took form in vows of noble obedience, so its decline was marked by the creation of orders which were little more than idle decorations. The Garter, the Golden Fleece, and the French and Spanish orders of the Spur, added no duties to life, and imposed no obligations. Dignified and beautiful as they were, and graced with famous names, they were avowedly instituted to revive the enthusiasm of knighthood, and were from the first an occasion of courtly pomp, not a school of chivalry. Few but nobles and princes were admitted to them. They were natural adjuncts to an age of pageantry, and their insignia, their mottoes, their bravery of robes and plumes, were only meant to decorate with additional splendour the splendid pageants of princes. They had little to do with the true life of chivalry, and the knights of the Crusades would have disdained them.

From the earliest times prisoners were held to ransom; Every man had his price; for a certain sum of money, according to all ancient codes of law and custom, a murder could be condoned, the tariff varying according to the quality of the person slain. This custom was carried into war, and important prisoners were ransomed with enormous sums, whilst the poorer were butchered in cold blood.[1] Ransom of the lord was one of the primary feudal aids. In the later times of chivalry, when defensive armour was brought to such perfection that an unhorsed knight was more easily taken prisoner than killed, it became the regular practice to make a trade of taking prisoners. The King of France cries out at Poictiers, 'I am John of Valois, not the King

[1] Froissart, I. 160.

of France. Never shall the King of France be held to ransom,'[1]—but when overpowered and mobbed by the English knights and squires, he asks them to lead him to the King of England, promising that they should get great riches by his ransom. The commercial value of a noble prisoner is always present to Froissart's mind;[2] 'many rich prisoners,'[3] is a common phrase in his pages: and this ignoble calculation had its effect in the conduct of battles, and introduced a gambling spirit which was far removed from the high professions of chivalry.

The decline of chivalry was owing to weakness, not to corruption. It had ceased to be the moving force of the world: but courage, good faith, and courtesy were not dead, and knightly characters shone out in a world which cared more for gymnastics and pageants than for battles and sieges.

The character of Henry V was truly chivalrous. He showed his respect for chivalry both by accepting the parole of the French princes after Agincourt, and by shutting them up in Pontefract Castle when they broke their word of honour. If chivalry could have been revived, he would have done it. Here and there, on the outskirts of the world, the knight can 'chevaucher' as of old. The Battle of Otterburn, with all its circumstances, carries us back to the days of Edward I, though the counsel of Hotspur's friends, not to adventure himself abroad in the fields against all the power of Scotland, was not the counsel of

[1] 'Finance.'

[2] John de Helemes, a squire, became 'a great knight' for the ransom (6000 nobles) of Thomas Lord of Berkeley.

[3] 'Grant foison de bons prisonniers.'

chivalry. 'It is better to lose one pennon,' they said, 'than two or three hundred knights and squires.' But the battle itself, the romantic ride, the disregard of all the rules of war, the *mêlée* itself, the deeds of lance and sword, the ransoming of prisoners, the courtesy of victors and vanquished, are like a page out of a *chanson de geste.*

This however was border skirmishing, not serious warfare. When great armies met in the field, the battles were no longer decided by the shock of knights in armour. Archers and pikemen were taking their place. The estate of yeomen was exalted by the importance of archery; the Black Death abolished villenage, and gave the labourer and the common soldier self-respect. A king's power now depended upon yeomen and peasants; and his armies were musters of churls, not squadrons of men-at-arms. Mercenary cavalry were now as good soldiers as knightly levies, and far easier to manage. War was becoming democratized. The power of the baronage in all countries was passing into the hands of sovereigns who would not endure private war, and who brought great armies of obedient infantry into the field. The leaders of free companies, the archers, gunners, and pikemen who served them must have been aware that the art of noble warfare had become a trade, and was becoming a science; though they did not foresee that all this parade would soon pass away in the smoke of gunpowder.

Side by side with the development of a new art of war went the breaking down of feudalism. Though feudal tenure, with all its incidents, lasted in England till the Great Rebellion, it had become a form of law, no longer

a relation of government between lord and vassal. Warwick the Kingmaker was the last feudal chieftain, and the lesson taught by him was taken to heart by the York and Tudor sovereigns. To all appearance a Henry I or John, who could with a word order a man's head to be chopped off or his eyes torn out, was a more powerful personage than a king who could only proceed by attainder or Star Chamber. But the Norman and Plantagenet kings were never safe against a combination of barons; Henry VII was the supreme head of the nation. Petty sovereignty, the right of holding a castle and carrying on a private feud, was essential to feudalism, and was implied in all the institutions of chivalry; and the one decayed and died with the other. When Henry VII fined the Earl of Oxford £10,000 for dressing his retainers in his own liveries, he declared the feudal system at an end. Chivalry had no reality except as the symbol of feudal power. When that fell away, it passed into the hands of heralds and masters of the ceremonies, and before long sank into contempt, leaving its trappings to become the ornament of state pageantry. Chivalry had served its time. It had regulated the spirit of war and brought it into harmony, or at least into a treaty, with religion; it had ennobled the relations between men and women, and given women a station from which they have never fallen; it had given lustre to the virtues of honour and courtesy; it had softened the barbarity of war; and had left its virtues and graces to be developed by later ages. Setting aside the 'fripperies,' the glitter of tournaments and banquets, true chivalry ceased to be the exclusive possession of the gentry, and its maxims were better

obeyed by many a plain trooper of King Charles or Cromwell than by the de Foix's and La Hire's, the Neviles and Percys who rode to battle in plate and mail, killing, burning and plundering for the love of ladies and in honour of the Swan, the Pheasant, or the Peacock.

The pride of personal and ancestral worth which lies at the foundation of chivalry is also a fundamental element in feudalism, and these two institutions were inseparable. Equality of blood is older than feudalism: the Celtic or Teutonic warriors who chose one of the blood of Odin[1] to be their king were equal among themselves, and the name peer—'*pair*'—tells the same story of equality within a caste. The line between 'noble' and 'gentle' is nowhere very sharply drawn, least of all in England, where the law or custom of primogeniture prevented the creation of a baronial caste, a *noblesse* or *Adel*, and where the nobility has always been mixed with the gentry, and the gentry and burgess class have had access to the peerage. 'Disparagation,' guarded against by Magna Carta, was never unknown, kings' daughters marrying peers, and kings themselves their subjects. The distinction between noble and gentle has, however, always been understood in England, though we know little of that exclusive pride which is expressed in the sayings,

Duc je dédaigne,
Roy je ne puis,
Rohan je suis;

and

Je suis ni roy ni prince ni duc aussy,
Je suis le sire de Coucy;

[1] To this day the blood of Odin holds itself as a thing apart, not to be mingled with a meaner strain, except when for reasons of state Vasas, Bonapartes, and Bernadottes have been admitted into the circle of 'equal birth.'

and 'Who made you Count?' 'Who made you King?' the answer of Adelbert Count of Tours to Hugh Capet. The notion of equality among nobles in their own class, and something like equality between noble and gentle, has never been lost in England; and to these two classes the order of chivalry was confined. 'I can make you a lord, but only God can make you a gentleman,' was as intelligible a thousand years ago as to-day. Gentility outlived and outlives its political importance. The democratic elector of to-day prefers a gentleman to a self-made man, and has no objection to be ruled by Cecils and Cavendishes; but from the time of the York and Tudor monarchy pride of birth has been a sentiment, not a condition of power. 'A nobleman, a gentleman, a commoner,' said Oliver Cromwell: and so says the English man of the twentieth century.

The want of consideration for inferiors was ingrained in mediæval customs, and was not dependent upon the rise or fall of chivalry. The pride of the gentry was broken by disaster, or worn away by contact with inferiors, such as the *noblesse de robe* in France and the trading class in England; not softened by any ideas of natural equality or obligation of justice. If anything, the formulation of degrees in rank sharpened the distinction between noble and not-noble; the growth of ceremony and etiquette put up artificial barriers between those who were naturally equal. Power takes its own precedence without consulting a master of the ceremonies. When power goes, precedence is valued for itself. The knights of the Middle Ages were feared and obeyed by the people: when they ceased to be

all-powerful, they were either respected as country gentlemen and political leaders, as in England, or hated and despised as in France, where for the most part they ceased to reside upon their estates, preferring the service of the court, and pushing their private fortunes in the almost uninterrupted wars which fill the history of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The right of private war, one of the privileges most dear to the feudal mind, was recognised by Teutonic custom from the earliest ages. It was as old as the days of Tacitus; and was originally a matter of kinship. The vendettas or 'feuds' (*faida, fehde*) of families were confirmed to them by immemorial usage, and were connected under the feudal system with the tenure of fiefs. 'Autre que gentilhomme (*i.e.* the holder of a fief) ne peut guerroyer.' Any lord or robber-knight who had a tower of his own considered it his right and part of his honour to make war on his neighbours, and in early times there was no central power strong enough to control him. The Truce of God[1] does honour to the Gaulish bishops who made it current in the world in the course of the eleventh century, under the sanction of Leo IX. It was accepted in England, perhaps by Edward the Confessor, though too little observed for a century or more. From Wednesday to the following Monday in every week,[2] and for a longer period at certain seasons of the Christian

[1] The Truce of God was in one form or another an ancient Teutonic institution. The novelty (a sign of the time) was the subjecting it to ecclesiastical authority.

[2] 'Omnibus Sabbatis ab hora nona et tota die insequenti usque ad diem Lunae.' 'du Mercredy soleil couchant tresqu'a Lundy soleil levant.' This was a counsel of perfection. Saturday afternoon to Monday was all that could practically be secured by the Church.

year, no arms were to be moved in Christian lands. Such an ordinance could not be carried out: but the enactment of it touched the conscience, and strengthened those princes who for any cause wished to limit the license of their subjects in making war (*bella domestica*, *consuetudinaria*)[1] upon each other.

Private war was put down summarily in England by the Norman and Angevin kings, and was only tolerated when the royal power was weak. England was filled with castles during the anarchy of Stephen's reign. The Barons' War was a war for the possession of castles, and with it the power of making war.

The English nobility and gentry learnt to take part in national wars only, and to live at peace among their neighbours. Only on the Scottish Border and the Welsh Marches, Mortimers, Percys, Neviles, and Dacres kept warlike state, and maintained (and sometimes troubled) the king's peace.[2]

In France, it was abolished only after a long struggle. Louis IX forbade private war in all his lands (1257), and it is worth noting that he did not consider the poor man's plough beneath his royal consideration . . . 'mandamus vobis, ne . . . . guerras aliquas vel incendia faciatis, vel agricolas qui serviunt carrucis seu aratris disturbetis,' but he was not able to enforce his orders, and in his reign a civil war was fought for the succession to the county of Champagne. Philip IV renewed the prohibition in 1311, Charles V in 1380. The last enactment in France was issued by Lewis XI in 1451, by which time the power of the great feudatories had much declined.

[1] Ducange, *Dissertation* xxix.

In Germany, where the central power was weak, emperors issued edicts without much success. Henry III forbade all private defiances and established (on parchment) an universal peace. Frederick Barbarossa and Frederick II ordained that good cause must be given and forty days' notice, or it was treason to make war. But the right was not disputed, and was not abrogated in Germany till after the French Revolution. It was the law, but not the custom, that vassals should not make war upon their lords; but the vassal was held blameless to the overlord if he obeyed his immediate lord's command. In other countries the king's will prevailed at length, and one of the worst features of the feudal system, and a great bulwark of knightly and baronial power was destroyed, and with it the opportunity of gaining practice in war, the common business of chivalry.

It will easily be understood that the warlike prejudice made neighbours (on a great or a small scale) quarrelsome who might have lived at peace; and that the more license there was to quarrel, the more quarrels would there be. War was the daily bread of chivalry: and the suppression of private war limited opportunities of military adventure and distinction and tamed the spirit of knighthood.

Chivalry must be regarded as an institution founded in barbarous times and based upon a condition of permanent war, in which the influence of the warrior class was paramount and their power predominant over all other influences. In such a condition noble birth was esteemed above the natural value, and the pride of personal worth, courage and military skill was exaggerated and tended to increase, and to substitute an aristocracy of rank and courage

for an equality within the limits of the military class. As civilization—social, military and political—advanced, whilst at the same time degrees of rank and chivalric honour became more sharply defined, the hierarchy of chivalry came to represent less and less the forces which ruled society. The consequence was that the rules and customs of chivalry became artificial and unreal. The point of honour was exaggerated, and personal pride took the place of the duties incumbent on knighthood. Hence the unnatural development of the punctilio and the duel, which increased in proportion as knights ceased to feel the corporate responsibility of political power connected with feudal service, and laid more stress upon pride of individual birth and station. The knights continued to be as brave in battle as their predecessors: but their military ascendency had given way to modern war, and the duel became the test by which one knight's valour was distinguished above another's.

In the region of gallantry, whilst the old phrases were used and the same devotion to ladies professed, a corrupt state of morals and the attraction of the gentry to the Court brought about a state of society in which the conquest rather than the service of ladies was the desired object. If we compare the mediæval romances with the writings of Brantôme or Grammont, we see how deep a degradation had taken place. In the former, amidst much grossness and licence and some perversion of natural morality, a high ideal of knightly service and womanly honour is held up. In the latter a gentleman's reputation for gallantry depends upon the number of conquests he can make, and the ladies vie with each other in the number of gallants devoted to

them. When the forms and usages of chivalry had been so much perverted, we must look for true chivalry outside the knightly class; and we find in fact that the virtues of good faith, devotion to duty and respect for women are better set forth in the lives of the lesser gentry and the trading classes than in those of the nobles.

The decline of religious belief which marks the age of the Renaissance affected the cultivated classes more than the ignorant. To the latter, when the time came, a new religious enthusiasm was imparted by the open Bible and the hope of a return to primitive Christianity. The nobles and gentry had lost the simple beliefs of the Middle Ages, and so far as they shared in the culture of the Renaissance were pagan or sceptical in religion, combining with this temper the dislike of innovations which is natural to a ruling class. The knight of the fifteenth century was either orthodox or indifferent to religion: it was not till a later date, when chivalry hardly professed to be alive, that princes and nobles were inspired with a religious *furia*, and the world was torn to pieces by Wars of Religion.

When the sixteenth century European state-system had come into full existence, and chivalry, in its proper sense, had come to an end, it was still the form which state and ceremony naturally took. The ceremonies attending the investiture of a Knight of the Bath were performed with the greatest magnificence by Henry VIII, who also invested Esquires with much splendour. The Field of the Cloth of Gold outdid all report of pageantry. Knights were dubbed on the field by Queen Elizabeth's generals, among them Robert Sidney and Leicester: it was one of the counts against

Essex that he had made too many knights in Spain and Ireland: for this privilege, once common to all knights, was now becoming a royal prerogative. Francis I sought knighthood at the hands of Bayard; who after the ceremony waved his sword on high, and said that a sword which had been so honoured should henceforth only be drawn in fight against the infidels. Another declension from the ancient usage of knighthood was that civilians, men of the robe and merchants, were now made 'carpet knights.'

How low chivalry had sunk by the 16th century we may judge by the fact that Francis I, who broke his parole to Charles V, and whose character is summed up by Michelet —'les femmes, la guerre, la guerre pour plaire aux femmes,' is called 'le roi cavalier;' and Gaston de Foix, who murdered 15,000 of the inhabitants of Brescia, and threw away his life in a blind fury of military rage, is put side by side with Bayard. Bayard himself was indeed a pattern of chivalry. He served as a page at the court of Lewis XII, and then as one of the Gentlemen of the Court Royal, where he broke lances and served ladies. He held a bridge against two hundred cavaliers, alone. He accepted a noble lady's ransom and gave it to her daughter for a marriage portion. Yet Bayard, whose character and exploits give him a right to rank with the best knights of the middle ages, killed his man with sword and dagger in a duel, the details of which are little less than disgusting. The duel, introduced from Italy, raged in France throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the best lives in the country were at the mercy of professional swordsmen, ruffians such as Entragnes and Bouteville. The duello indeed became on

the Continent a school of brutality, under the guise of excessive politeness. Everybody knows the story of Crichton's death; and Lord Herbert of Cherbury gives us to understand that French ladies of honour had no smiles for gallants who had not killed their half-dozen men. Such excesses might attract fire-eaters like Lord Herbert; but the fathers of the men who fought in the Great Rebellion were for the most part not bravos, but sober-minded Englishmen. England, however, was infected by this curse, nor did Puritanism drive away the infection. Both Cavaliers and Roundheads quarrelled freely among themselves, though it was contrary to military etiquette to fight duels in the presence of the enemy. The fashion came in again with the Restoration, and only died out by the middle of the nineteenth century.

The history of the decline of chivalry shows that in its later development chivalry submitted to the secular influences which corrupted the Church and made the Reformation inevitable. It had failed in its purpose as a part of Christianity. The perfect knight (according to the prevalent estimate), must be that assemblage of contradictions which is known by the name of a 'man of honour,' but he need not practise any but the warlike virtues. Freeman says (with much truth so far as regards the later chivalry), that the law of honour displaced the law of right. 'The standard of honour' (he writes)[1] 'is submission not to law but to opinion—*i.e.* the opinion of the class to which the man belongs.' It is fantastic, sentimental, and capricious. 'The standard of the good knight, the rule of

[1] *Fortnightly Review*, Dec., 1876.

good faith, respect and courtesy as due from one knight to another, displaces the higher standard of the man, the citizen, and the Christian.'[1] Chivalry declined from its saintly professions. As we have pointed out, the principles of chivalry are not chargeable with the dissociation of honour from morality and religion. But chivalry endured this, and suited its rules accordingly, and therefore must endure to take some share of the blame.

[1] *William Rufus*, Vol. II.

CHAPTER XVI

MERITS AND FAULTS

Chivalry not chargeable with common characteristics of the epoch—Courage, good faith, religion—Freeman on Chivalry—Influence of the rule of honour—Instances: William Rufus, Henry III, Edward I, du Guesclin, Manny, Chandos—Troubadours—The Black Prince at Limoges—Humanizing of war—Instances of barbarity—Treatment of women in ancient and mediæval times—Ideals of female virtue in mediæval literature—Story of Robert Bruce—Hatred of treason—Alfonso of Castile; Duke of Guelders; John of France; Richard I, and William de Barres—Brilliancy and gaiety of chivalric life—Liberality—Hospitality—Almsgiving and largesse—Sir John Audley and the Black Prince—du Guesclin—Religious observances—*Parage* and *Orgueil*—Pride and self-will—Contempt of common men—Prestige of noble birth and pride of station—Summary.

It is a common mistake to attribute to an institution the merits and defects which belong not to the institution itself, but to the times in which it existed. The Catholic priesthood is credited with cruelty, bigotry and tyranny, evils which it shared with a rude and ignorant laity. The lukewarmness, often objected to, of the Church of England in the eighteenth century is paralleled by a lax rule of political morality; for sinecures and pluralities in the Church did not offend the moral sense of a laity who received and spent public money without service done. The licence of the stage in the seventeenth century is not to be charged upon actors and dramatic writers, but upon a society rejoicing in the reaction from Puritan strictness. Gothic churches were beautiful, not only because they were built by men of genius, and in the ages of faith, but because all craftsmen lived in an atmosphere of beauty, and felt rightly about form and

colour. St. Francis and St. Clare soared high above the pitch of their time: but it was a time when the lights and shadows of life were strongly marked, and originality naturally took an extravagant expression. In the same way, much that is put down to the account of chivalry should be attributed to the common ideas of the Middle Ages. If the rules which bound the brotherhood of chivalry had never been formulated, prowess in war, splendour in peace, and the love of ladies would still have been features of the age; and we must separate as far as possible what is accidental and common to the time from what is special and essentially connected with the order of knighthood.

Soldierly courage is an essential of knighthood. But the Christian knights were not braver than the Saracens against whom they fought, nor than the Vikings and Gaulish champions from whom they were descended. Harold and Cnut were as valiant warriors as the Black Prince and Sir Walter Manny, though they may not have tested their valour by comparing themselves with Roland and Charlemagne, nor considered it as a possession peculiar to men of noble blood.

Good faith, another of the knightly virtues, is not confined to men who live by rules of honour. Alfred was 'truthteller' as much as the Black Prince. Though the rules of chivalry helped to keep violent and licentious men from the commission of crimes, and forced them to do virtuous actions, virtue which is based on a rule is less excellent than virtue which is the natural expression of a stainless character.

Religion, again, is one of the things demanded of the

perfect knight. But in the Middle Ages all ranks and classes of men, clergy, nobles, and churls absolutely believed the truths of Christianity as taught by the Catholic Church. Unscrupulous men like Henry II and his sons were as sincere believers as St. Thomas Aquinas. King John sought protection for his sinful soul by laying his body between those of two saints. His brother Richard prayed that his time in purgatory might be lengthened to balance the greatness of his sins. Bertrand de Born hoped to lay up enough merits in the Crusade to return to Provence and the love of ladies.

When all men were believers, when the duty of rendering to all men—or at any rate to all gentlemen—their rights was universally professed, when to be called a coward was the worst of imputations, the characteristics of a simple, ignorant and warlike society, we must not attribute to a dominant class of military nobles principles which pervaded the whole of society. Chivalry was a powerful force in the world. But the mediæval world would not have been wholly unlike what it was if knighthood had not been invented, for feudalism can exist without chivalry, if the converse is impossible; as we may judge from the fact that the standards of right and wrong were not very different in countries where chivalry was more, and where it was less, perfected. France was the most chivalric country in Europe; and there more than elsewhere the sense of honour was fully developed in its good and bad aspects. Is this cause or effect? Feudalism, clerical domination, splendour and ceremony, brilliancy and vitality, existed everywhere, and chivalry received as much as it gave of all

these elements of social life. To the mass of the people chivalry was no more than a show in which they could take no part as actors; and the progress of enlightenment and liberty was not conducted on the lines of chivalry, but rather in opposition to its pretensions.

According to Freeman,[1] chivalry was seen in its perfection at the court and camp of Edward III. He speaks of the 'follies and fripperies of the reign of Knights and Ladies.' Edward I 'cannot be wholly acquitted' of yielding to 'a certain French influence.' He can see no chivalry before the Conquest, nor in the Norman and Angevin kings except in William Rufus the tyrant, Stephen the good-natured, brilliant adventurer, Richard I the knight errant. 'A slight touch of chivalrous feeling' (he says) 'was all that ever infected England.' He quotes with approval Dr. Arnold's saying, that 'the spirit of chivalry is the spirit of Antichrist.' He speaks with just contempt of the 'endless fantastic courtesies towards men, and still more towards women, which are among the marks of chivalry,' and condemns that 'arbitrary choice of one or two virtues to be practised in such an exaggerated degree as to become vices,' and the false code of honour which supplants the laws of God and man and the principles of right; but he does not give enough credit to the better side of the code of honour and courtesy. 'The whole chivalrous idea,' he says, 'is un-English and rather French than Norman.' We should not think it necessary to combat this view, if it were not that the authority of Freeman and his disciple J. R. Green has great weight, and that Freeman's learning has

[1] *William Rufus*, Vol. II., 207, 500.

blinded students of history to his partiality and want of sober judgment.

The fact that chivalry declined from its early purity in the fourteenth century, and still more in the fifteenth and sixteenth, casts no discredit upon the institution itself. When chivalry ceased to be a guide of life it was time for it to disappear; and it lingered too long on the stage after its part was played. The virtues which a knight was specially bound to practise were courage, good faith, courtesy, liberality, respect for women, piety. If a knight possessed these, he might be cruel in war, tyrannical at home, greedy of lands and money and tenacious of rights, without any imputation on his 'honour.' And these very virtues might exist only in a conventional form, and often be carried into absurdity, and yet suffice for the maintenance of the knightly character. Courage might be overdone, as when Taillefer attacked the English army at Hastings; when Richard I with a few companions rode up and down the Saracen lines at Ascalon (though they dared not touch him); when de Argentine tilted against the Bruce at Bannockburn, and fell under his battleaxe; when a knight of more hardihood than wisdom smote a castle gate with his lance, and was knocked on the head by a butcher: or when a Saracen cavalier risked and lost his life against the crusaders of St. Lewis at their landing; or when Sir Walter d'Auvriche rode at the Saracens alone, shouting 'Châtillon'! but gained a death without glory, for he fell from his horse and was clubbed by the enemy; and King Lewis said he would not wish to have a thousand knights such as he was. But if knighthood was always true to the ideal of courage, good faith was subject to considerations of policy, unless

pledged by knightly word; the duty of courtesy did not extend to inferiors in rank; liberality was often another name for ostentation and extravagance; respect for women was in great measure a matter of convention and ceremony, and was at all times compatible with licence of morals: and the obligations of religion were not essential to the knightly character, except so far as they included submission to the doctrines and authority of the Church, and observation of prescribed services. We are not to conclude that the rules of chivalry were a dead letter, because they were not always obeyed by those who acknowledged their authority: what is important to remark is that in chivalry a standard was set up before the eyes of the knightly class higher than any which had been known before, and that the existence of this standard was an important factor in the progress from barbarous to civilized life which took place during the chivalric period. Chivalry was an education of barbarism and a check upon brutality. It made men ashamed of their lower passions, and gave them ideals to judge by, and patterns to follow.

The rule of honour exercised so much control over William Rufus, in some respects the worst man of his time, that if he had given his knightly word he would never break it, though he had neither mercy, justice, nor fear of God. A knightly conscience sometimes restrained him from the crimes which were the natural expression of his character. Of him, as of Richard I, it might be said that his bad qualities were his own, his good qualities were due to chivalry.[1] There is little of the chivalrous character in

[1] Freeman.

Henry I and Henry II, the great organisers of the English realm—but Henry III, weak, extravagant, untrustworthy and passionate, represented in his courtesy, placability, his piety and simplicity,[1] many of the graces of chivalry. His son Edward I was a perfect soldier of the knightly type, a lover of courtly and military pomp, of excitement and feats of arms. His ruthless severity at the battle of Nazareth is typical of the darker side of the crusader's character; his adventure at the 'little battle' of Châlons, and his encounter with Adam de Gourdon in Alton wood are like a page from a romance of chivalry. He is the very mirror of *dreyture*, *rectitudo*—good faith, as it was understood in the legal age of which he is the most complete type.

In du Guesclin, of a later age, the leading qualities are valour, gaiety, and honour. He has none of the softer virtues of chivalry. He could not read or write, for as a boy he would not be taught, being so masterful and wild that his father and mother despaired of his ever being worthy to be a knight. 'Riens ne sçavait de lettres, ne oncques n'avoit trouvé maistre de qui il se laissast doctriner: mais les vouloit ferir et fraper.' This young Orson won his mother's heart by a deed of knight-errantry; and his daring and military genius soon brought him into notice. The stories told of him describe a rough soldier, as capable of cruelty as of generosity, hearty and humorous of speech, jesting on equal terms with the Black Prince and with the English whose tower he is assaulting, fighting *comme un lion déchainé*, and trying a wrestling bout with a common soldier

[1] Il re della semplice vita.—Dante, *Purg.* vii. 130.

There is little refinement in du Guesclin; his parallel may be found in any country and at any period. What makes him conspicuous amongst his compeers is his courage and his stainless honour.

Sir Walter Manny, one of Froissart's heroes, was one of the best knights of Edward III, and a good instance of the chivalry of that age. He vowed before the ladies and lords of the Court that he would be the first knight to set foot on the soil of France, and take a castle or a town. He performed his vow, riding night and day with forty spears, and surprising the town of Mortaigne. On another occasion he rescued, as a true knight errant, two gentlemen whose heads were in danger from 'an uncourteous knight' who had taken them prisoner. He took Bergerac less by force of arms, than by showing the French men-at-arms a bold countenance, and spared the people of the town on their making submission. 'Qui merci prie,' said his companion the Earl of Derby, 'merci doit avoir.' He sent back a splendid present of jewels given to him by the King of France while he was his prisoner, at the bidding of King Edward. It was by his advice that Edward III spared the life of Eustace de St. Pierre and his fellows at Calais: 'for (said Sir Walter) it would be said by all that it was great cruelty if he had put to death these burghers who have put themselves in your mercy to save the others.'[1]

Sir John Chandos was a soldier of a graver type. He saved the ladies of the castle of Poys, when in danger of being illtreated by the mob. He challenged a French

[1] The King's answer to this address was: 'Messire Gaultier, souffrez-vous: il n'en sera autrement mais qu'on fasse venir le coupe-tête.'

lord, the Sire de Claremont, for bearing the same arms as himself.[1] At Poictiers and at Auray his advice won the battle. He tried to dissuade the Black Prince from joining Peter the Cruel in the Navarete campaign, and afterwards from taxing Aquitaine more heavily than the people could endure, but in vain. Being insulted by the Earl of Pembroke, he refused to support him in a campaign in Anjou: but on hearing that the Earl was in straits, he forgot the personal injury, and fell gloriously in his defence. Such men and such deeds ennoble war, and justify our pride in Crécy and Poictiers.

To turn to the softer graces of chivalry, the gallantry which refined, if it did not purify, the relations between men and women; the lives of the Troubadours are full of examples of chivalrous devotion. Pierre Vidal so honoured his lady, Louve de Penautier, the wife of the Viscount of Baux, that for her love and in her honour he called himself Loup, clothed himself in a wolfskin and was torn by the hounds.[2] The poet Geoffrey Rudel[3] fell in love with the Princess of Tripoli from her description, and sailed to Syria to visit her. He fell sick on the voyage, and died of joy when she had come on board and accepted his love. The Princess retired into a nunnery. When Chaucer says

> The god of love—ah, benedicite—
> How mighty and how great a god is he!

he is thinking, not of Helen or Dido, but of all the lore of love which is enshrined in the romances of chivalry, three centuries in which the sentiment of love had been dwelt

[1] See Chapter vii.

[2] Rowbotham, *Troubadours*, p. 134.

[3] The hero of Edmond Rostand's *La Princesse Lointaine*.

upon and raised from grossness to high refinement, and women had passed from the condition of slaves to the repute of goddesses.

When the Black Prince is blamed, and justly blamed, for slaughtering the townsfolk of Limoges[1] whilst he kept the knights and gentlemen for ransom, his critics tell us that he was cruel because he was a knight; for that the duty of a knight did not include shewing mercy to prisoners of low degree. But in the times which preceded chivalry all the inhabitants of a captured town were killed or sold for slaves, without distinction of classes. To kill the poor and save the rich was an imperfect clemency, and savours of aristocratic pride. But all the alleviations of war have come from these imperfect beginnings; and courtesy to gentlefolks was succeeded by mercy to the rank and file. Anything which tends to humanize war is a gain to humanity, not so much because it diminishes the sufferings of the combatants and those who depend upon them (for if we had imagination enough to conceive of this, perhaps we should not go to war at all) but because the paradox of mercy in

[1] Gentz d'armes bien iij centz
sanz les burgeis de par dedenz:
mais touz y furent mortz ou pris
par le noble Prince de pris.
(Chandos Herald 4061).

There is no allusion to the butchery, and no disapproval, but Froissart laments the Prince's fury, and calls the sufferers martyrs. The fair fame of the Black Prince has given a prominence to this affair which otherwise it would not have received. No one thinks much the worse of Henry V for slaughtering the prisoners at Agincourt. The invading armies of Edward III wasted the whole country, and burnt all houses and farms from la Hogue to Crécy, and again from Bordeaux to Poictiers. When Henry V in the campaign of Agincourt abstained from this it was a rare instance of mercy or policy: the lives and property of the inhabitants were by the custom of war at the pleasure of the invader.

bloodshed has in effect changed the purpose of war. In ancient times, the object of a general was to kill as many of the enemy as possible; in modern war to kill as few as possible, consistently with the accomplishment of his duty, which is to bring the war to a successful close. This improvement has not been produced by the influence of the civic spirit, or the idea of the equality of men and the value of the common soldier's life. It is the natural outcome of the courtesy of war, and had its commencement in chivalry, which taught the soldier to regard his enemy as a sharer with him of knightly rights. A thousand years of Christianity passed without any softening of the severity of war, till chivalry brought in the idea of an universal bond of knightly brotherhood, and taught the lesson of respect to an enemy. Chivalry did not make men unmerciful and savage: that it did not by a miracle convert unmerciful and savage men to gentleness is no discredit to its humanizing tendency. The blindings and mutilations so common in the early Middle Ages are not chargeable on chivalry, except in cases where personal pride had been offended by an insult, as when William the Conqueror burnt le Mans in revenge for a jest of Philip I of France; or when at Alençon he cut off the hands and feet of the garrison who had cried 'Hides, hides, for the tanner!'[1] or when at the battle of Lewes Prince Edward rode down the Londoners to punish them for an act of discourtesy to his mother; or later at Berwick. These were acts of vengeance natural to a savage state of society, and such are practised daily among Oriental peoples from Morocco to China. When Henry I allowed Ralph

[1] Pel, pel, pur li parmentiers.'

Harenc to cut off the noses and put out the eyes of two innocent girls, his own grand-daughters, or when he took ludicrous vengeance upon their mother, who had tried in revenge to slay him with a crossbow,[1] he was acting not as a knight but as a barbarian. There is a mixture of generosity and barbarity in the behaviour of Du Guesclin at Carentan. The town surrendered, and pillage was forbidden. But eight of the defenders, indignant at the insults of Du Guesclin's men[2] went back into a tower with what men they could gather, and determined to hold out, declaring that Du Guesclin should never set foot inside. 'Certes, gars,' said Du Guesclin, 'vous mentirez; car j'y souperay en cette nuict et vous jeûnerez dehors.' He kept his word, and cut off the heads of all the English whom he found there; as by the rule of war he had a right to do.

The custom of war in ancient and barbaric times had no mercy upon women. Penelope's handmaids were cruelly butchered by Ulysses and Telemachus. Andromache and Cassandra became the slaves of their captors. In historical times, the woman and children of conquered cities were driven to the slave market. A host of slave dealers followed every Roman army, and every siege ended in a sack like that of Badajoz or Magdeburg. The same rule prevailed in the dark ages in North and South. No respect for women as women was professed or practised in war or peace, except here and there in Palestine, at Sparta, and at Rome for many centuries before and after the Christian era. The Gospel doctrine

[1] Ordericus Vitalis.

[2] '*les grandes huées sur les Anglais*' (il ne faut jamais insulter les vaincus) says the chronicler.

concerning women seemed to be forgotten, except in the times of the Roman Empire and in the Christian East.

The chronicler of the Crusades (1097) even praises the crusaders for their moderation towards the Saracen women at Antioch: 'nihil aliud mali eis Franci fecerunt, excepto quod lanceas suas in ventres earum infixerunt.'

Partly, it may be, from the far East, and certainly in part from the far West and from Provence, through the medium of chivilry, as we have shown above, the Christian world became aware that women were worthy of kindness and respect. For this alone it would have been worth while for the world to have submitted to the discipline of chivalry; for no more powerful influence to soften and humanize has ever appeared in the world. Courtesy henceforward ceased to be merely a debt of honour. It took a new colour of gentleness, forbearance, humility, and graciousness. The devotion paid to a mistress was transferred to the wife; and in the domestic life of modern nations the high position accorded to women according to the *gay saber* was maintained and purified. Detractors of chivalry perversely leave this out of sight, or dwell only on its abuses, which indeed are patent enough. Such figures as Godiva, Griselda, Beatrice, Laura, la Reine Berthe, Una, could not have been conceived without the ideals of chivalry; and under the same ideals grew up Elizabeth of Hungary, Blanche and Eleanor of Castile, Philippa of Hainault, Jane Gray, and (to go no nearer to our own days) the gracious ladies of the Tudor and Stuart times. The thing designated by the word 'lady' hardly existed in mediæval Europe before the times of chivalry. The women of Northern Europe were as rude as the men.

It was different, as we have seen, in Provence, where the new doctrine of *donnoy* was revealed, and whence it spread to the other lands.

It is true that (as in the instance of Robert of Normandy at Winchester) gentleness to women was for the most part confined to those of gentle rank, and that little respect was shown to other women; but there are instances to the contrary. One of the most notable of these is recorded of Robert Bruce, who caused the army to halt till a poor 'layndar' (washerwoman) should have been delivered of her child.

> 'This was a full great courtesy,
> that swilk a king and so mighty
> gert[1] his men dwell[2] on this manner,
> but for a poorë lavender.'[3][4]

There has never been a time when the virtue of good faith and the wickedness of treachery were not acknowledged. The sin of Judas is the capital crime of all history. The pledged word of a Bedouin sheikh, an Afghan emir, and a North American chief is inviolable. But there was no such complete security in Europe till the law of knightly honour was accepted. To entrap an enemy was considered fair play. The most solemn vows and oaths, the most binding covenants were often disregarded. Knots tied by the Church could be loosed by the Church, and oaths made under compulsion were looked upon as not binding. William of Normandy thought to hold Harold, not by good faith, but by fear of holy relics on which he had sworn. Oaths made with infidels were lightly regarded and

[1] Made. [2] Halt.

[3] Barbour, *Bruce*, B. xi. 270. [4] Like stories are told of the Emperor Trajan (Dante, *Purg.*, x. 73-93) and of Saladin.

easily dispensed, and Richard I, if he is not maligned by the Saracens, proudly refused to take an oath, saying that a king's word was superior to an oath,[1] and at the same time broke and kept his word according to his own convenience. A nobler example—historical or legendary—is that of Alfonso of Castile, who having been caught by the Moorish king Alaranu, and made to take an oath to his disadvantage, and afterwards getting the Moor into his power, made him annul the compact. 'And now,' said Alfonso, 'that oath which I made under restraint, I freely renew, when you are in my power.' Froissart records how the Duke of Guelders became the prisoner of a certain squire; who, hearing that the Grand Master of the Teutonic knights was marching against his castle and would certainly cut off his head if he entered it, went into hiding, reminding his prisoner that he had his parole. The Grand Master arrived and took the castle, but the Duke firmly refused to be set free, and render himself to his 'master' at the rendezvous appointed by him. Few kings and lords could resist the temptation of having their enemy within their grasp or getting possession of his castle by treachery. Diplomacy has always been a science of clever lying, and public promises, if found to be disadvantageous, are commonly repudiated or evaded. That better faith is kept in private life now than when every man feared his neighbour is due, perhaps, to the absence of fear rather than to a higher morality. Chivalry had no talisman to make men honest: but it was able to create a sanction which the

[1] The Cid did not think so, for he made King Alfonso swear three times, like Little John's banns.

worst men acknowledged, and which raised the standard of truth in the ruling class. To break one's knightly word was as disgraceful an act as to run away. The motive may have been the fear of public opinion or of retaliation, or that self-pride which was a cause both of strength and weakness to the knightly class. But, in any case, the habit of faithfulness was formed; and the later generations have something still to learn from the Middle Ages in this particular. '*Pactum serva*' might be interpreted in the narrowest sense: faith need not be kept with infidels and Jews (till the example of Saladin shamed the Christians into emulation of his nobility); the slightest flaw in a compact might annul it: but it was accepted throughout Christendom that a knight was bound by his word more strictly than by laws or ecclesiastical censures, and in this point as in many others what was laid down as a rule for knights and gentlemen was accepted as of universal obligation. The rule laid down was never abrogated or modified, and truthfulness is an excellent part of the character of a 'gentleman,' whether high-born or not.

One effect of the sanctity ascribed to the knightly word of honour was the extreme anger felt and expressed against treason: which is expressed in true mediæval manner by Dante, when he puts the three prime traitors, Judas, Brutus and Cassius in the very jaws of Lucifer at the lowest apex of hell. All the savageness of mediæval cruelty was let loose against traitors. The Abbé Suger (c. 1100) describes how some traitors were bound alive on a wheel shot at with arrows, and then left to be eaten by crows; one was tied to a stake with a savage dog; others were thrown from

towers. 'I cannot believe,' says Froissart, speaking of the King of Navarre and the Count of Harcourt in 1356, 'that such valiant persons, so noble and of such high extraction would have done or thought treason against their natural lord.' King John arrested them in person. 'Up, traitor! thou art not worthy to sit at my son's table.' He took a sergeant's mace into his hands, and struck the Count of Harcourt between the shoulders, exclaiming, 'On with you, proud traitor! go into prison (*à mal estrine*). By the soul of my father you will have good reason to sing when you are out of my hands.' He set the mob of Rouen upon Harcourt and his companions, and had them beheaded without allowing them a priest to shrive them. To another (the Count de Guisnes) he showed a compromising letter, and cried 'Ha! ha! evil traitor, you have well deserved death, and by the soul of my father you shall have it.' Henri de Malestroit, one of the king's clerks, who had aided Edward III against Philip VI, was put upon the pillory on three successive days, and died immediately after of the injuries received there from the mob. The imputation of treason may excuse the unknightly conduct of Richard I, at the frolic on the coast near Mategriffon Castle in Sicily, when the king and his knights jousted with a load of canes bought from a peasant of Catania. Richard found his match in a French knight called William de Barres, against whom it seems he had a grudge on account of a broken parole. 'What,' he cried to Robert de Breteuil who was coming to his assistance, 'do you think I want help to overthrow this traitor? Get away and leave me alone with him.'[1] The

[1] 'Aufer te et linque me cum illo solum.'—(Trivet).

traitor however held his own, and the other knights interfered and parted them. But Richard was so furious that he banished the French knight from his presence, and it was only after seeing the feats of arms done by de Barre, which almost equalled his own, and having fought side by side with him, that Richard consented to admit him to favour. In these instances we see not only an evidence of the brutality of mediæval passion, and the pride of birth and station, but also a proof of the hatred against a crime which struck at the heart of chivalry. No instances are needed to assure us that chivalry was a school of courtesy—we shall find them in every romance and in every page of Froissart. It is worth notice that courtesy is specially honourable in a violent age, when courage is the first of virtues, and men speak plainly to each other. The self-restraint exercised by hot-tempered soldiers in addressing each other is not the least among the influences which mould the character of a 'gentleman.' It may not be a Christian virtue, but it is in harmony with Christianity.

Wherever the knights of Christendom went, they took with them the joy of life, the brilliancy of spectacles, feasts and amusements, so far as possible, to which they were accustomed at home. Godfrey of Bouillon in the intervals of war amused himself in hunting Syrian bears. Richard I went hawking in Sicily, took away a poor man's hawk and was mobbed by the peasants. Philip Augustus on arriving at Acre lost a white gerfalcon which perched on the walls of the town: so magnificent a bird that the Saracens had never seen anything like it, and would accept no ransom. This gaiety had its bad side. The Christian camp at Acre was

full of drunkenness and debauchery. Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury, is reported to have died of grief after trying in vain to check these excesses (1190). He was heard to pray that God would take him away; 'for I have tarried too long in this camp.' Tournaments were held during war-time, as if the reality of battle was not enough; in these, Saracen champions sometimes took part. A Mohammedan writer describes a wedding procession in the Christian camp at which he happened to be present: the rich apparel, the crowns and jewels, the maidens attending the bride: and piously adds 'God keep us from such temptations.' Splendid presents of hawks, hounds, horses, and robes of state were exchanged between the chiefs of the two armies. The troubadour king wished to hear the Eastern music; and was gratified by Melech el Adel, Saladin's brother, with a concert in which two female singers took part. A like brilliancy and gaiety accompanied all the mediæval wars. Partly this is the natural relaxation of men engaged in serious business; but the form which it took was that of chivalry.

Liberality and hospitality again are among the distinguishing marks of a rude age. In the middle ages hospitality was an obligation incumbent upon all, and not specially connected with chivalry. But as the owners of lands and houses were for the most part gentlemen, hospitality came to be accounted one of the graces of chivalry; and in history and romance hospitality is given by the noble knight and grudged by the churl. Fulk Fitz-Warin had the king's highway diverted to pass through his hall at his manor at Alestun, so that all that passed by should partake of his

hospitality. In all the romances the knights are 'let into lodging and disarmed,' and tended by squires and ladies. Such sayings as:

> The house of Arthur is always open;
> The house of a chief has no porter;

breathe the true chivalrous spirit.

Modern life is not favourable to these simple virtues. The beggars, whom the Church loved, have been driven into the workhouse and the slums, and no longer offend us as we go through the streets. Largesse is turned into wages. The personal relations of master and servant, landlord and tenant, give place to a commercial transaction. Lords and bishops no longer keep open house for their retainers, and feed the poor at their gates with broken meats from the hall. The right to protect included the power to oppress, and we are well rid of both; but at the expense of much vitality and individuality, much that was beautiful and ennobling, much that put the problems of daily life into the hands of men and women to solve for themselves by personal action, not by handing them over to the policeman or the relieving officer. Almsgiving was preached by the Church as the duty of all: a joy was added to it, when it became also one of the obligations of knighthood, since the knight was to carry joy into all that he did. And according to the incorrect views of almsgiving which obtained in those times, princes and nobles were not forgetful of the poor.

There may be something ostentatious, and certainly impulsive and wasteful, in the more splendid gifts of which Froissart records so many instances: as that of Sir James

Audley, to whom the Black Prince gave 500 marks a year for his bravery on the field of Poictiers, and when the knight distributed this among the four squires[1] who had fought at his side all day, gave him more than as much again. When Du Guesclin's ransom was to be collected (which he arrogantly set at 100,000 florins, whereas the Black Prince would have been content with 10,000) Lord Chandos lent him ten thousand pounds, and the Princess of Wales gave him three hundred more. He met a poor knight who was coming back to prison at Bordeaux, because he had not been able to raise enough money for his ransom. 'How much do you want?' says De Guesclin. 'Sir, I am a hundred francs short.' 'That is not much: you will want another hundred for a horse and another for armour;' and so gave him three hundred francs, and delivered him from his captor, 'un tresmauvais glouton,' who had kept him thirty days with handcuffs on his wrists and irons on his legs. The riches of mediæval princes might have been better given to the poor, of whose labour they were the fruits: but to give splendidly is a fine example. Akin to these noble gifts are the pompous feasts and the parade of tournaments and ceremonies of state, which though they were meant to do honour to those of noble blood, were shared in their degree by the populace, and helped to make England merry.

Chivalry was, in one point of view, founded upon religion. The knight's vows were made before God, our Lady, and especially his patron Saint, and St. Michael and St. George,

[1] The names of these gallant gentlemen may be recorded; Dutton, Delves, Foulhurst, Hawkstone.

the patron Saints of chivalry. All knightly orders included special observances. The members of the religious orders were bound to chastity; and a notoriously evil life was more marked in a knight than in an ordinary Christian. But in view of the licence which chivalry not only tolerated but almost enjoined, it is impossible to think that love of God was one of the strongest motives of the chivalrous life. The knights took their religion easily, content if they confessed and did penance at the last, and passed away in the peace of the Church. There were many bad knights, as there were many bad Christians; and the knight was a Christian with a special obligation to live a good life.

When we turn to the other side of the picture, and separate the vices inherent in chivalry from those which were the common attribute of the age, we shall agree with Freeman and Green in remarking two salient faults. The first is pride. Though a distinction was drawn between *parage*, the high bearing and noble pride of a gentleman, the foundation of honour, courtesy, and liberality, and *orgueil*, which in obedience to the Church they looked upon as mortal sin, the two were often confounded in practice. Nothing can excuse the monstrous pride of William Rufus, *regio fastu perfervidus*, of the sons of Henry II, of Randolph Flambard the minister of William II, the splendid builder of Durham Cathedral and Castle, the richest and proudest noble of the time. 'Though I were as wise as Solomon, as brave as Alexander, as eloquent as Nestor, and were proud, I were as nothing,' says a knight in one of the romances. But of all nations the Franks were the proudest, in contempt of other nations and of

their own poorer countrymen.[1] The brutal pride of Count Robert of Paris is succeeded by the more courtly contempt of the Templars; but the fault is the same, and it was fostered by all the usages of chivalry. The self-will of Henry II, the unchristian tyranny of Gregory VII, Alexander III, and Innocent III, the self-worship of nobles who preyed upon their neighbours from their castles on the Danube or the Rhone or in the Italian towns, looking upon their subjects as only born to do their pleasure, were all born of pride. These crimes, to be sure, belonged to feudalism rather than to chivalry. The noble knight was bound by his vow to be merciful to all men, to protect the weak, and succour the miserable.

Contempt of common men is the second fault, for which no palliation can be found. The interests of the Church were too much bound up with those of the nobles for the clergy to make an effective protest. The feudal lords sharpened the antagonism between rich and poor, and bent the law to their own service, and it was not till the Valois and Tudor kings set themselves above both law and nobles that the nobles, reduced to weakness by their own dissensions, ceased to hold the lower classes in complete subjection.

Mediæval institutions set the weak at the mercy of the strong; chivalry professed to temper power with gentleness to all; but the knightly caste was so uplifted by pride that they made small account of the poor, and confined to their own class the exercise of the virtues which they practised.

[1] L'excès d'orgeuil attaché au nom de gentilhomme.—Thierry, *Temps Merov*: i. 250.

We shall mistake the character of the Middle Ages if we do not appreciate the immense prestige of noble birth and the excess of pride which accompanied it. 'Cela s'appelle-t-il un homme?' is hardly an exaggeration. The churl was looked upon by the noble much as the negro by the American in our own days. Though the ballads now and then delight to tell stories of maidens of low degree, the true feeling of the gentry is better shewn in the tragic poem of *Glasgerion*. Froissart's admiration of a gallant show in arms generally shows itself in enumeration of the dukes and counts who were present. He knows nothing of the common soldiers; and tells without any disgust how Philip VI ordered the slaughter of the Genoese archers at Crecy because they were in the way. 'Tuez la piétaille.' St. Lewis, it is true, rebuked Joinville, when speaking slightingly of some poor man, by saying 'I suppose God made him,' and told him that he did ill in not washing the feet of the poor, as the King of England (Henry III) did. But it did not naturally occur to the mind of a mediæval gentleman that the tradesman and the labourer had not only necessities to be relieved and souls to be saved, but rights to be respected and maintained. The mutual bitterness of feeling which this engendered is shown by the furious excesses of the Jacquerie and the risings under Wat Tyler and others, and the atrocious cruelty which accompanied their suppression. Pride of station is less ignoble than pride of purse, and less foolish than pride of birth without means to support its pretensions. But it was a hindrance to the progress of liberty. Its interest was to make the villein as much the property of his lord as the land which he tilled: and

chivalry has much to answer for in having divided the people of each country into two nations; as the popular literature of the Middle Ages abundantly testifies. In England, as in France, though with less rigour, the commonalty were 'peuple taillable et corvéable à merci,' and the results of family pride combined with feudal power were more harshly pressed in Germany, the most feudal of countries, than in any other part of Christendom.

Some students of history can see nothing in chivalry but the exaggeration of the military spirit, a childish ceremonialism, and the degradation of the family by an unnatural code of gallantry. Viewed from another side, this may be described as the civilizing of warfare, the introduction of stateliness and courtesy into common life, and the raising of the position of women. It was an evil that the world should be ruled so long by warrior nobles, instead of Roman gentlemen: but as this had to be so, we may well doubt whether any other force would have tamed and disciplined rude Franks and Normans more powerfully than the ordinances and customs of chivalry.

THE END.

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